



**MARIUS.**

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**LES**

**MISERABLES.**

BY

**VICTOR HUGO.**

To be published in Five Parts---Each Part a Complete Novel,  
as follows :

FANTINE,  
COSETTE,

MARIUS,  
ST. DENIS,

JEAN VALJEAN.

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RICHMOND:  
WEST & JOHNSTON.

1863.



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(THE WRETCHED.)

A Novel.

BY

VICTOR HUGO.

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A NEW TRANSLATION, REVISED.

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IN FIVE PARTS:

I. FANTINE:

III. MARIUS.

II. COSETTE.

IV. ST. DENIS.

V. JEAN VALJEAN.

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PART III.

M A R I U S .

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# LES MISÉRABLES.

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## MARIUS.

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### Book First.

#### PARIS.

##### I.

##### PARVULUS.

Paris has a child, and the forest has a bird; the bird is called a sparrow; the child is called the *gamin*.

Couple these two ideas, the one containing all the heat of the furnace, the other all the light of the dawn; strike together these two sparks, Paris and infancy, and there leaps forth from them a little creature. *Homuncio*, Plautus would say.

This little creature is full of joy. He has not food to eat every day, yet he goes to the show every evening, if he sees fit. He has no shirt to his back, no shoes to his feet, no roof over his head; he is like the flies in the air who have none of all these things. He is from seven to thirteen years of age, lives in troops, ranges the streets, sleeps in the open air, wears an old pair of his father's pantaloons down about his heels, an old hat of some other father, which covers his ears, and a single suspender of yellow listing, runs about, is always on the watch and on the search, kills time, colors pipes, swears like an imp, hangs about the wine-shop, knows thieves and robbers, is hand and glove with the street-girls, rattles off slang, sings smutty songs, and, withal, has nothing bad in his heart. This is because he has a pearl in his soul, innocence; and pearls do not dissolve in mire. So long as a man is a child, God wills that he be innocent.

If one could ask of this vast city, what is that creature? she would answer, "it is my bantling."

The *gamin* of Paris is the dwarf of the giantess.



We will not exaggerate. This cherub of the gutter sometimes has a shirt, but then he has only one; sometimes he has shoes, but then they have no soles; sometimes he has a shelter, and he loves it, for there he finds his mother; but he prefers the street, for there he finds his liberty. He has sports of his own, roguish tricks of his own, of which a hearty hatred of the bourgeois is the basis; he has his own metaphors; to be dead he calls *eating dandelions by the root*; he has his own occupations, such as running for hacks, letting down carriage-steps, sweeping the crossings in rainy weather, which he styles making *ponts des arts*, crying the speeches often made by the authorities on behalf of the French people, and digging out the streaks between the flags of the pavement; he has his own kind of money, consisting of all the little bits of wrought copper that can be found on the public thoroughfares. This curious coin, which takes the name of *scraps*, has an unvarying and well regulated circulation throughout this little gipsy-land of children.

He has a fauna of his own, which he studies carefully in the corners; the good God's bug, the death's head grub, the mower, the devil, a black insect that threatens you by twisting about its tail which is armed with two horns. He has his fabulous monster which has scales on its belly, and yet is not a lizard, has warts on its back, and yet is not a toad, which lives in the crevices of old lime-kilns and dry cisterns, a black, velvety, slimy, crawling creature, sometimes swift and sometimes slow of motion, emitting no cry, but which stares at you, and is so terrible that nobody has ever yet seen it; this monster he calls the "deaf thing." Hunting for deaf things among the stones is a pleasure which is thrillingly dangerous. Another enjoyment is to raise a flag of the pavement suddenly and see the wood-lice. Every region of Paris is famous for the discoveries which can be made in it. There are earwigs in the wood-yards of the Ursulines, there are wood-lice at the Pantheon, and tadpoles in the ditches of the Champ-de-Mars.

In repartee, this youngster is as famous as Talleyrand. He is equally cynical, but he is more sincere. He is gifted with an odd kind of unpremeditated jollity; he stuns the shop-keeper with his wild laughter. His gamut slides merrily from high comedy to farce.

A funeral is passing. There is a doctor in the procession. "Hallo!" shouts a *gamin*, "how long is it since the doctors began to take home their work?"

Another happens to be in a crowd. A grave-looking man, who wears spectacles and trinkets, turns upon him indignantly: "You scamp, you've been seizing my wife's waist!"

"I, sir! search me!"

In the evening, by means of a few pennies which he always manages to scrape together, the *homuncio* goes to some theatre. By the act of passing that magic threshold, he becomes transfigured; he was a *gamin*, he becomes a *titi*. Theatres are a sort of vessel turned upside down with the hold at the top; in this hold the *titi* gather in crowds. The *titi* is to the *gamin* what the butterfly is to the grub; the same creature on wings and sailing through the air. It is enough for him to be there with his radiance of delight, his fulness of enthusiasm and joy, and his clapping of hands like the clapping of wings, to make that hold, close, dark, fetid, filthy, unwholesome, hideous, and detestable, as it is, a very Paradise.

Give to a being the useless, and deprive him of the needful, and you have the *gamin*.

This being jeers, wrangles, sneers, jangles, has frippery like a baby, and rags like a philosopher, fishes in the sewer, hunts in the drain, extracts gaiety from filth, lashes the street corners with his wit, fleers and bites, hisses and sings, applauds and hoots, tempers Hallelujah with turalural, psalmodizes all sorts of rhythms from *De Profundis* to the *Chie-en-lit*, finds without searching, knows what he does not know, is Spartan even to roguery, is witless even to wisdom, is lyric even to impunity, would squat upon Olympus, wallows in the dung-heap and comes out of it covered with stars. The *gamin* of Paris is an urchin Rabelais.

He is never satisfied with his pantaloons unless they have a watch-fob.

He is seldom astonished, is frightened still less frequently, turns superstitions into doggerel verses and sings them, collapses exaggerations, makes light of mysteries, sticks out his tongue at ghosts, dismounts everything that is on stilts, and introduces caricature into all epic compositions. This is not because he is prosaic, far from it; but he substitutes the phantasmagoria of fun for solemn dreams. Were Adamastor to appear to him, he would shout out: "Hallo, there, old Bug-a-boo!"

Paris begins with the cockney and ends with the *gamin*, two beings of which no other city is capable; passive acceptance satisfied with merely looking on, and exhaustless enterprise; Prudhomme and Fouilhou. Paris alone comprises this in its natural history. All monarchy is comprised in the cockney; all anarchy in the *gamin*.

This pale child of the Paris suburbs lives, develops, and gets into and out of "scrapes," amid suffering, a thoughtful witness of our social realities and our human problems. He thinks himself careless, but he is not. He looks on, ready to laugh; ready, also, for something else. Whoever ye are who call yourselves Prejudice, Abuse, Ignominy, Oppression, Iniquity, Despotism, Injustice, Fanaticism, Tyranny, beware of the gaping *gamin*.

This little fellow will grow.

Of what clay is he made? Of the first mud of the street. A handful of common soil, a breath, and behold, Adam! It is enough that a God but pass. A God always has passed where the *gamin* is. Chance works in the formation of this little creature. By this word chance we mean, in some degree, hazard. Now, will this pigmy, thoroughly kneaded with the coarse common earth, ignorant, illiterate, wild, vulgar, mobbish, as he is, become an Ionian, or a Bœotian? Wait, *currit rota*, the life of Paris, that demon which creates the children of chance and the men of destiny, reversing the work of the Latin potter, makes of the jug, a costly vase.

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## II.

### A SCRAP OF HISTORY.

At the period, although it is almost contemporaneous, in which the action of this story is laid, there was not, as there now is, a police officer at every street-corner, (an advantage we have no time to enlarge upon)

truant children abounded in Paris. The statistics gave an average of two hundred and sixty homeless children, picked up annually by the police on their rounds, in open lots, in houses in process of building, and under the arches of bridges. One of these nests, which continues famous, produced "the swallows of the bridge of Arcola." This, moreover, is the most disastrous of our social symptoms. All the crimes of men begin with the vagrancy of childhood.

We must except Paris, however. To a considerable degree, and notwithstanding the reminiscence we have just recalled, the exception is just. While in every other city, the truant boy is the lost man; while, almost everywhere, the boy given up to himself is, in some sort, devoted and abandoned to a species of fatal immersion in public vices which eat out of him all that is respectable, even conscience itself, the *gamin* of Paris, we must insist, chipped and spotted as he is on the surface, is almost intact within. A thing magnificent to think of, and one that shines forth resplendently in the glorious probity of our popular revolutions; a certain incorruptibility results from the mental fluid which is to the air of Paris, what salt is to the water of the ocean. To breathe the air of Paris preserves the soul.

What we here say alleviates, in no respect, that pang of the heart which we feel whenever we meet one of these children, around whom we seem to see floating the broken ties of the disrupted family. In our present civilization, which is still so incomplete, it is not a very abnormal thing to find these disruptions of families, separating in the darkness, scarcely knowing what has become of their children—dropping fragments of their life, as it were, upon the public highway. Hence arise dark destinies. This is called, for the sad chance has coined its own expression, "being cast upon the pavement of Paris."

This abandonment of children, be it said, in passing, were not discouraged by the old monarchy. A little of Egypt and of Bohemia in the lower strata, accommodated the higher spheres, and answered the purpose of the powerful. Hatred to the instruction of the children of the people was a dogma. What was the use of "a little learning?" Such was the password. Now the truant child is the corollary of the ignorant child. Moreover, the monarchy sometimes had need of children, and then it skimmed the streets.

Under Louis XIV., not to go any further back, the king, very wisely, desired to build up a navy. The idea was a good one. But let us look at the means. No navy could there be, if, side by side with the sailing vessel, the sport of the wind, to tow it along, in case of need, there were not another vessel capable of going where it pleased, either by the oar or by steam; the galleys were to the navy, then, what steamers now are. Hence, there must be galleys; but galleys could be moved only by galley-slaves. Colbert, through the provincial attendants and the parlements, made as many galley-slaves as possible. The magistracy set about the work with good heart. A man kept his hat on before a procession, a Huguenot attitude, he was sent to the galleys. A boy was found in the street; if he had no place to sleep in, and was fifteen years old, he was sent to the galleys. Great reign, great age.

Under Louis XV. children disappeared in Paris; the police carried them off—nobody knows for what mysterious use. People whispered

with affright horrible conjectures about the purple baths of the king. Barbier speaks ingenuously of these things. It sometimes happened that the officers, running short of children, took some who had fathers. The fathers, in despair, rushed upon the officers. In such cases, the parlement interfered and hung—whom? The officers? No; the fathers!

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### III.

#### THE GAMIN WILL HAVE HIS PLACE AMONG THE CLASSIFICATIONS OF INDIA.

The Parisian order of *gamins* is almost a caste. One might say: nobody wants to have anything to do with them.

This word *gamin* was printed for the first time, and passed from the popular language into that of literature, in 1834. It was in a little work entitled *Claude Gueux* that the word first appeared. It created a great uproar. The word was adopted.

The elements that go to make up respectability among the *gamins* are very varied. We knew and had to do with one who was greatly respected and admired, because he had seen a man fall from the towers of Notre Dame; another, because he had succeeded in making his way into the rear inclosure where the statues intended for the dome of the Invalides were deposited, and had scraped off some of the lead; a third, because he had seen a diligence upset; and still another, because he knew a soldier who had almost knocked out the eye of a bourgeois.

This explains that odd exclamation of a Parisian *gamin*, a depth of lamentation which the multitude laugh at without comprehending: "*Oh, Lordy, Lordy! aînt I unlucky! only think I never even saw anybody fall from a fifth story;*"—the words pronounced with an inexpressible twang of his own.

What a rich saying for a peasant was this: "Father so-and-so, your wife's illness has killed her; why didn't you send for a doctor?" "What are you thinking about, friend?" says the other. "Why, we poor people, *we have to die ourselves.*" But, if all the passiveness of the peasant is found in this saying, all the rollicking anarchy of the urchin of the suburbs is contained in the following:—A poor wretch on his way to the gallows was listening to his confessor, who sat beside him in the cart. A Paris boy shouted out: "*He's talking to his long-gown. Oh, the sniveller!*"

A certain audacity in religious matters sets off the *gamin*. It is a great thing to be strong-minded.

To be present at executions is a positive duty. The imps point at the guillotine and laugh. They give it all kinds of nicknames: "End of the Soup"—"Old Growler"—"Sky-Mother"—"The Last Mouthful," etc., etc. That they may lose nothing of the sight, they scale walls, hang on to balconies, climb trees, swing to gratings, crouch into chimneys. The *gamin* is a born slater as he is a born sailor. A roof inspires him with no more fear than a mast. No festival is equal to the execution-ground—La Grève. Samson and the Abbé Montes are the

really popular names. They shout to the victim to encourage him. Sometimes, they admire him. The *gamin* Lacenaire, seeing the horrible Dautun die bravely, used an expression that was full of future: "*I was jealous of him!*" In the order of *gamins* Voltaire is unknown, but they are acquainted with Papavoine. They mingle in the same recital, "the politicals" with murderers. They have traditions of the last clothes worn by them all. They know that Tolleron had on a forgerman's cap, and that Avril wore one of otter skin; that Louvel had on a round hat, that old Delaporte was bald and bareheaded, that Castaing was ruddy and good-looking, that Bories had a sweet little beard, that Jean Martin kept on his suspenders, and that Lecouffé and his mother quarrelled. *Don't be finding fault now with your basket*, shouted a *gamin* to the latter couple. Another, to see Debacker pass, being too short in the crowd, began to climb a lamp-post on the quay. A gendarme on that beat scowled at him. "Let me get up, Mr. Gendarme," said the *gamin*. And then, to soften the official, he added: "I won't fall." "Little do I care about your falling," replied the gendarme.

In the order of *gamins*, a memorable accident is greatly prized. One of their number reaches the very pinnacle of distinction, if he happen to cut himself badly, "into the bone," as they say.

The fist is by no means an inferior element of respect. One of the things the *gamin* is fondest of saying is, "I'm jolly strong, I am." To be left-handed makes you an object of envy. Squinting is highly esteemed.

In summer, he transforms himself into a frog; and in the evening, at nightfall, opposite the bridges of Austerlitz and Jena, from the coal rafts and washerwomen's boats, he plunges head-foremost into the Seine, and into all sorts of infractions of the laws of modesty and the police. However, the policemen are on the look-out, and there results from this circumstance a highly dramatic situation which, upon one occasion, gave rise to a fraternal and memorable cry. This cry, which was quite famous about 1830, is a strategic signal from *gamin* to *gamin*; it is scanned like a verse of Homer, with a style of notation almost as inexplicable as the Eleusinian melody of the Panthenæans, recalling once more the ancient "Evohe!" It is as follows: "*Ohé! Titi, ohé! lookee yonder! they're comin' to ketch ye! Grab your clothes and cut through the drain!*"

Sometimes this gnat—it is thus that he styles himself—can read; sometimes he can write; he always knows how to scrawl. He gets by some unknown and mysterious mutual instruction, all talents which may be useful in public affairs; from 1815 to 1830, he imitated the call of the turkey; from 1830 to 1848, he scratched a pear on the walls. One summer evening, Louis Philippe returning to the palace on foot, saw one of them, a little fellow, so high, sweating and stretching upon tip-toe, to make a charcoal sketch of a gigantic pear, on one of the pillars of the Neuilly gateway; the king, with that good-nature which he inherited from Henry IV., helped the boy, completed the pear; and gave the youngster a gold Louis, saying, "*The pear's on that, too!*"\* The

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\* The caricaturists of the day were in the habit of representing Louis Philippe's head in the shape of a pear.—ED.

*gamin* loves uproar. Violence and noise please him. He execrates "the" curés. One day, in the Rue de l'Université, one of these young scamps was making faces at the porte-cochère of No. 69. "Why are you doing that at this door?" asked a passer-by. The boy replied: "There's a curé there." It was, in fact, the residence of the Papal Nuncio. Nevertheless, whatever may be the Voltairean tendencies of the *gamin*, should an occasion present itself to become a choir-boy, he would, very likely, accept, and in such case would serve the mass properly. There are two things of which he is the Tantalus, which he is always wishing for, but never attains—to overthrow the government, and to get his trowsers mended.

The *gamin*, in his perfect state, possesses all the policemen of Paris, and, always upon meeting one, can put a name to the countenance. He counts them off on his fingers. He studies their ways, and has special notes of his own upon each one of them. He reads their souls as an open book. He will tell you off-hand and without hesitating—Such a one is a *traitor*; such a one is *very cross*; such a one is *great*; such a one is *ridiculous*; (all these expressions, traitor, cross, great and ridiculous, have in his mouth a peculiar signification)—"That chap thinks the Pont Neuf belongs to him, and hinders *people* from walking on the cornice outside of the parapets; that other one has a mania for pulling *persons'* ears; etc., etc."

The *gamin* is the expression of Paris, and Paris is the expression of the world.

For Paris is a sum total. Paris is the ceiling of the human race. All this prodigious city is an epitome of dead and living manners and customs. He who sees Paris, seems to see all history through with the sky and constellations in the intervals. Paris has a Capitol, the Hôtel de Ville; a Parthenon, Notre Dame; a Mount Aventine, the Faubourg St. Antoine; an Asinarium, the Sorbonne; a Pantheon, the Pantheon; a Via Sacra, the Boulevard des Italiens; a tower of the Winds; public opinion—and supplies the place of the Gemoniæ by ridicule. Its *majo* is the "faraud," its *Trasteverino* is the suburban; its *hammal* is the strong man of the market-place; its *lazzarone* is the pègre; its cockney is the *gandin*. All that can be found any where can be found in Paris. Ransack your memory for something which Paris has not. The vat of Trophonious contains nothing that is not in the wash-tub of Mesmer; Ergaphilas is resuscitated in Cagliostro; the Brahmin Vâsaphantâ is in the flesh again in the Count Saint Germain; the cemetery of St. Médard turns out quite as good miracles as the Oumoumié mosque at Damascus.

Paris has an Æsop in Mayeux, and a Canidia in Mademoiselle Lenormand. It stands aghast like Delphos at the blinding realities of visions; it tips tables as Dodona did tripods. It enthrones the grisette as Rome did the courtesan; and, in fine, if Louis XV is worse than Claudius, Madame Dubarry is better than Messalina. Paris combines in one wonderful type which has had real existence, and actually elbowed us, the Greek nudity, the Hebrew ulcer, and the Gascon jest. It mingles Diogenes, Job and Paillasse, dresses up a ghost in old numbers of the *Constitutionnel*, and produces Shodruc Duclos.

With all that, Paris is a good soul. It accepts every thing right roy-

ally; it is not difficult in the realms of Venus; its Callipyge is of the Hottentot stamp; if it but laughs, it pardons; ugliness makes it merry; deformity puts it in good humor, vice diverts its attention; be droll and you may venture to be a scamp; even hypocrisy, that sublimity of cynicism, it does not revolt at; it is so literary that it does not hold its nose over Basilius, and is no more shocked at the prayer of Tartuffe than Horace was at the hiccough of Priapus. No feature of the universal countenance is wanting in a profile of Paris.

Paris is a synonym of Cosmos. Paris is Athens, Rome, Sybaris, Jerusalem, Pantin. All the eras of civilization are there in abridged edition, all the epochs of barbarism also. Paris would be greatly vexed, had she no guillotine.

A small admixture of the Place de Grève is good. What would all this continual merry-making be without that seasoning? Our laws have wisely provided for this, and, thanks to them, this relish turns its edge upon the Carnival.

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#### IV

##### THE FUTURE LATENT IN THE PEOPLE.

As to the people of Paris, even when grown to manhood, it is, always, the *gamin*; to depict the child is to depict the city, and therefore it is that we have studied this eagle in this open-hearted sparrow.

It is in the suburbs especially, we insist, that the Parisian race is found; there is the pure blood; there is the true physiognomy; there this people works and suffers, and suffering and toil are the two forms of men. There are vast numbers of unknown beings teeming with the strangest types of humanity, from the stevedore of the Rapée to the horse-killer of Montfaucon. *Fex urbis*, exclaims Cicero; *mob*, adds the indignant Burke; the herd, the multitude, the populace. Those words are quickly said. But if it be so. What matters it? what is it to me that they go bare-foot? They cannot read. So much the worse. Will you abandon them for that? Would you make their misfortune their curse? Cannot the light penetrate these masses? Let us return to that cry: Light! and let us persist in it! Light! light! Who knows but that these opacities will become transparent? are not revolutions transfigurations? Proceed, philosophers, teach, enlighten, enkindle, think aloud, speak aloud, run joyously towards the broad day-light, fraternize in the public squares, announce the glad tidings, scatter plentifully your alphabets, proclaim human rights, sing your Marseillaises, sow enthusiasms broad-cast, tear off green branches from the oak-trees. Make thought a whirlwind. This multitude can be sublimated. Let us learn to avail ourselves of this vast combustion of principles and virtues, which sparkles, crackles, and thrills at certain periods. These bare feet, these naked arms, these rags, these shades of ignorance, these depths of abjectness, these abysses of gloom may be employed in the conquest of the ideal. Look through the medium of the people, and you shall discern the truth. This lowly sand which you trample beneath your feet, if you cast it into the furnace, and let it melt and

seethe, shall become resplendent crystal, and by means of such as it a Galileo and a Newton shall discover stars.

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## V

## LITTLE GAVROCHE.

About eight or nine years after the events narrated in the second part of this story, there was seen, on the Boulevard du Temple, and in the neighborhood of the Chateau d'Eau, a little boy of eleven or twelve years of age, who would have realized with considerable accuracy the ideal of the *gamin* previously sketched, if, with the laughter of his youth upon his lips, his heart had not been absolutely dark and empty. This child was well muffled up in a man's pair of pantaloons, but he had not got them from his father, and in a woman's chemise, which was not an inheritance from his mother. Strangers had clothed him in these rags out of charity. Still, he had a father and a mother. But his father never thought of him, and his mother did not love him. He was one of those children so deserving of pity from all, who have fathers and mothers, and yet are orphans.

This little boy never felt so happy as when in the street. The pavement was not so hard to him as the heart of his mother.

His parents had thrown him out into life with a kick.

He had quite ingenuously spread his wings, and taken flight.

He was a boisterous, pallid, nimble, wide-awake, roguish urchin, with an air at once vivacious and sickly. He went, came, sang, played pitch and toss, scraped the gutters, stole a little, but he did it gaily, like the cats and the sparrows, laughed when people called him an errand-boy, and got angry when they called him a ragamuffin. He had no shelter, no food, no fire, no love, but he was light-hearted because he was free.

When these poor creatures are men, the millstone of our social system almost always comes in contact with them, and grinds them, but while they are children they escape because they are little. The smallest hole saves them.

However, deserted as this lad was, it happened sometimes, every two or three months, that he would say to himself: "Come, I'll go and see my mother!" Then he would leave the Boulevard, the Cirque, the Porte Saint Martin, go down along the quays, cross the bridges, reach the suburbs, walk as far as the Salpêtrière, and arrive—where? Precisely at that double number, 50-52, which is known to the reader, the Gorgeau building.

At the period referred to, the tenement No. 50-52, usually empty, and permanently decorated with the placard "Rooms to let," was, for a wonder, tenanted by several persons who, in all other respects, as is always the case at Paris, had no relation to or connexion with each other. They all belonged to that indigent class which begins with the small bourgeois in embarrassed circumstances, and descends, from grade to grade of wretchedness, through the lower strata of society, until it reaches those two beings in whom all the material things of civilization terminate, the scavenger and the rag-picker.



The 'landlady' of the time of Jean Valjean was dead, and had been replaced by another exactly like her. I do not remember what philosopher it was who said: "There is never any lack of old women."

The new old woman was called Madame Burgon, and her life had been remarkable for nothing except a dynasty of three paroquets, which had in succession wielded the sceptre of her affections.

Among those who lived in the building, the wretchedest of all were a family of four persons, father, mother, and two daughters nearly grown, all four lodging in the same garret room, one of those cells of which we have already spoken.

This family at first sight presented nothing very peculiar but its extreme destitution; the father, in renting the room, had given his name as Jondrette. Some time after his moving in, which had singularly resembled, to borrow the memorable expression of the landlady, the entrance of *nothing at all*, this Jondrette said to the old woman, who, like her predecessor, was, at the same time, portress and swept the stairs: "Mother So and So, if anybody should come and ask for a Pole or an Italian or, perhaps, a Spaniard, that is for me."

Now, this family was the family of our sprightly little barefooted urchin. When he came there, he found distress and, what is sadder still, no smile; a cold hearthstone and cold hearts. When he came in, they would ask: "Where have you come from?" He would answer: "From the street." When he was going away, they would ask him: "Where are you going to?" He would answer: "Into the street." His mother would say to him: "What have you come here for?"

The child lived, in this absence of affection, like those pale plants that spring up in cellars. He felt no suffering from this mode of existence, and bore no ill-will to anybody. He did not know how a father and mother ought to be.

But yet his mother loved his sisters.

We had forgotten to say that on the Boulevard du Temple this boy went by the name of little Gavroche. Why was his name Gavroche? Probably because his father's name was Jondrette.

To break all links seems to be the instinct of some wretched families.

The room occupied by the Jondrettes in the Gorbau tenement was the last at the end of the hall. The adjoining cell was tenanted by a very poor young man who was called Monsieur Marius.

Let us see who and what Monsieur Marius was.

## Book Second.

## THE GRAND BOURGEOIS.

## I

## NINETY YEARS OLD AND THIRTY-TWO TEETH.

IN the Rue Boueherat, Rue de Normandie, and Rue de Saintonge, there still remain a few old inhabitants who preserve a memory of a fine old man named M. Gillenormand, and who like to talk about him. This man was old when they were young. This figure, to those who look sadly upon that vague swarm of shadows which they call the past, has not yet entirely disappeared from the labyrinth of streets in the neighborhood of the Temple, to which, under Louis XIV., were given the names of all the provinces of France, precisely as in our days the names of all the capitals of Europe have been given to the streets in the new Quartier Tivoli; an advance, be it said by the way, in which progress is visible.

M. Gillenormand, who was as much alive as any man can be, in 1831, was one of those men who have become curiosities simply because they have lived a long time; and who are strange, because formerly they were like everybody else, and now they are no longer like anybody else. He was a peculiar old man, and very truly a man of another age—the genuine bourgeois of the eighteenth century, a very perfect specimen, a little haughty, wearing his good old bourgeoisie as marquises wear their marquisates. He had passed his ninetieth year, walked erect, spoke in a loud voice, saw clearly, drank hard, ate, slept, and snored. He had every one of his thirty-two teeth. He wore glasses only when reading. He was of an amorous humor, but said that for ten years past he had decidedly and entirely renounced women. He was no longer pleasing, he said; he did not add: “I am too old,” but, “I am too poor.” He would say: “If I were not ruined, he! he!” His remaining income, in fact, was only about fifteen thousand livres. His dream was of receiving a windfall, and have an income of a hundred thousand francs, in order to keep mistresses. He did not belong, as we see, to that sickly variety of octogenarians who, like M. de Voltaire, are dying all their life; it was not a milk and water longevity; this jovial old man was always in good health. He was superficial, hasty, easily angered. He got into a rage on all occasions, most frequently when most unseasonable. When anybody contradicted him he raised his cane; he beat his servants as in the time of Louis XIV. He had an unmarried daughter over fifty years old, whom he belabored severely when he was angry, and whom he would gladly have horsewhipped. She seemed to him about eight years old. He cuffd his domestics vigorously, and would say: Ah! slut! One of his oaths was: *By the big slippers of big slipperdom!* In some respects he was of a singular tranquility: he was

shaved every day by a barber who had been crazy and who hated him, being jealous of M. Gillenormand on account of his wife, a pretty coquettish woman. M. Gillenormand admired his own discernment in everything, and pronounced himself very sagacious; this is one of his sayings: "I have indeed some penetration; I can tell when a flea bites me, from what woman it comes." The terms which he oftenest used were: *sensitive men*, and *nature*. He did not give to this last word the broad acceptation which our epoch has assigned to it. But he twisted it into his own use in his little chimney-corner satires: "Nature," he would say, "in order that civilization may have a little of everything, gives it even some specimens of amusing barbarism. Europe has samples of Asia and Africa, in miniature. The cat is a drawing-room tiger, the lizard is a pocket crocodile. The danseuses of the opera are rosy savagesses. They do not eat men, they feed upon them. Or rather, the little magicians change them into oysters, and swallow them. The Caribs leave nothing but the bones, they leave nothing but the shell. Such are our customs. We do not devour, we gnaw; we do not exterminate, we clutch."

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## II.

### LIKE MASTER, LIKE DWELLING.

HE lived in the Marais, Rue des Filles de Calvaire, No. 6. The house was his own. This house has been torn down, and rebuilt since, and its number has probably been changed in the revolutions of numbering to which the streets of Paris are subject. He occupied an ancient and ample apartment on the first story, between the street and the gardens, covered to the ceiling with fine Gobelin and Beauvais tapestry representing pastoral scenes; the subjects of the ceiling and the panels were repeated in miniature upon the arm-chairs. He surrounded his bed with a large screen with nine leaves varnished with Coromandel lac. Long, full curtains hung at the windows, and made great, magnificent folds. The garden, which was immediately beneath his windows, was connected with the angle between them by means of a staircase of twelve or fifteen steps, which the old man ascended and descended very blithely. In addition to a library adjoining his room, he had a boudoir which he thought very much of, a gay retreat, hung with magnificent straw-color tapestry, covered with fleur de lys and with figures from the galleries of Louis XIV., and ordered by M. de Vivonne from his convicts for his mistress. M. Gillenormand had inherited this from a great-aunt, who died at the age of a hundred. He had had two wives. His manners held a medium between the courtier which he had never been, and the councillor which he might have been. He was gay, and kind when he wished to be. In his youth, he had been one of those men who are always deceived by their wives and never by their mistresses, because they are at the same time the most disagreeable husbands and the most charming lovers in the world. He was a connoisseur in painting. He had in his room a wonderful portrait of nobody knows who, painted by Jordaens, done in great daubs with the brush,

with millions of details, in a confused manner and as if by chance. M. Gillenormand's dress was not in the fashion of Louis XV., nor even in the fashion of Louis XVI.; he wore the costume of the *incroyables* of the Directory. He had thought himself quite young until then, and had kept up with the fashions. His coat was of light cloth, with broad facings, a long swallow tail, and large steel buttons. Add to this short breeches and shoe buckles. He always carried his hands in his pockets. He said authoritatively: *The French Revolution is a mess of scamps.*

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### III.

#### LUKE ESPRIT.

When sixteen years old, one evening, at the opera, he had had the honor of being stared at, at the same time, by two beauties then mature and celebrated and besung by Voltaire, La Camargo and La Sallé. Caught between two fires, he had made a heroic retreat towards a little danseuse, a girl named Nahenry, who was sixteen years old, and with whom he fell in love. He was full of reminiscences. He would exclaim: "How pretty she was, that Guimard Guimardin Guimardinette, the last time I saw her at Longchamps, frizzled in lofty sentiments, with her curious trinkets in turquoise, her dress the color of a new-born child, and her muff in agitation!" He had worn in his youth a vest of London short, of which he talked frequently and fluently. "I was dressed like a Turk of the Levantine Levant," said he. Madame de Boufflers, having accidentally seen him when he was twenty years old, described him as a "charming fool." He ridiculed all the names which he saw in politics or in power, finding them low and vulgar. He read the journals, *the newspapers, the gazettes*, as he said, stifling with bursts of laughter. "Oh!" said he, "what are these people! Corbière! Humann! Casimir Perier! those are ministers for you. I imagine I see this in a journal: M. Gillenormand, Minister; that would be a joke. Well! they are so stupid that it would go!" He called everything freely by its name, proper or improper, and was never restrained by the presence of women. He would say coarse, obscene and indecent things with an inexpressible tranquillity and coolness which was elegant. It was the off-hand way of his time. It is worthy of remark, that the age of periphrases in verse was the age of crudities in prose. His godfather had predicted that he would be a man of genius, and gave him these two significant names: Luke Esprit.

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### IV

#### AN INSPIRING CENTENARIAN.

He had taken several prizes in his youth at the college at Moulins, where he was born, and had been crowned by the hands of the Duke de Nivernais, whom he called the Duke de Nevers. Neither the Convention, nor the death of Louis XVI., nor Napoleon, nor the return of the

Bourbons, had been able to efface the memory of this coronation. *The Duke de Nevers* was to him the great figure of the century. "What a noble, great lord," said he, "and what a fine air he had with his blue ribbon!" In Monsieur Gillenormand's eyes, Catharine II. had atoned for the crime of the partition of Poland by buying the secret of the elixir of gold from Bestuchef, for three thousand roubles. Over this he grew animated. "The elixir of gold," exclaimed he, "Bestuchef's yellow dye, General Lamotte's drops, these were in the eighteenth century, at a louis for a half ounce flask, the great remedy for the catastrophes of love, the panacea against Venus. Louis XV sent two hundred flasks to the Pope." He would have been greatly exasperated and thrown off his balance if anybody had told him that the elixir of gold was nothing but the perchloride of iron. Monsieur Gillenormand worshipped the Bourbons and held 1789 in horror: he was constantly relating how he saved himself during the Reign of Terror, and how, if he had not had a good deal of gaiety and a good deal of wit, his head would have been cut off. If any young man ventured to eulogize the Republic in his presence, he turned black in the face, and was angry enough to faint. Sometimes he would allude to his ninety years of age, and say, *I really hope that I shall not see ninety-three twice*. At other times he intimated to his people that he intended to live a hundred years.

## V.

## BASQUE AND NICOLETTE.

He had his theories. Here is one of them: "When a man passionately loves women, and has a wife of his own for whom he cares but little, ugly, cross, legitimate, fond of asserting her rights, roosting on the code and jealous on occasion, he has but one way to get out of it and keep the peace, that is to let his wife have the purse-strings. This abdication makes him free. The wife keeps herself busy then, devotes herself to handling specie, verdigrises her fingers, takes charge of the breeding of the tenants, the bringing up of the farmers, convokes lawyers, presides over notaries, harangues justices, visits pettifoggers, follows up law-suits, writes out leases, dictates contracts, feels herself sovereign, sells, buys, regulates, promises and compromises, binds and cancels, cedes, concedes, and retrocedes, arranges, deranges, economises, wastes; she does foolish things, a magisterial and personal pleasure, and this consoles her. While her husband disdains her, she has the satisfaction of ruining her husband." This theory, Monsieur Gillenormand had applied to himself, and it had become his history. His wife, the second one, had administered his fortune in such wise that there remained to Monsieur Gillenormand, when one fine day he found himself a widower, just enough to obtain, by turning almost everything into an annuity, an income of fifteen thousand francs, three-quarters of which would expire with himself. He had no hesitation, little troubled with the care of leaving an inheritance. Moreover, he had seen that patrimonies met with adventures, and, for example, became *national property*; he had been present at the avatars of the consolidated thirds, and he

had little faith in the ledger. "*Rue Quincampoix for all that!*" said he. His house in Rue des Filles du Calvaire, we have said, belonged to him. He had two domestics, "a male and a female." When a domestic entered his service, Monsieur Gillenormand re-baptized him. He gave to the men the name of their province: Nîmois, Comtois, Poitevin, Picard. His last valet was a big, pursy, wheezy man of fifty-five, incapable of running twenty steps, but as he was born at Bayonne, Monsieur Gillenormand called him Basque. As for female servants, they were all called Nicolette in his house (even Magnon, who will re-appear as we proceed.) One day a proud cook, with a blue sash, of the lofty race of porters, presented herself. "How much do you want a month?" asked Monsieur Gillenormand. "Thirty francs." "What is your name?" "Olympie." "You shall have fifty francs, and your name shall be Nicolette."

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## VI.

### IN WHICH WE SEE LA MAGNON AND HER TWO LITTLE ONES.

At Monsieur Gillenormand's grief was translated into anger; he was furious at being in despair. He had every prejudice, and took every license. One of the things of which he made up his eternal relief and his internal satisfaction was, we have just indicated, that he was still a youthful gallant, and that he passed for such energetically. He called this having "royal renown." His royal renown sometimes attracted singular presents. One day there was brought to his house in a basket, something like an oyster-basket, a big boy, new-born, crying like the deuce, and duly wrapped in swaddling clothes, which a servant girl turned away six months before attributed to him. Monsieur Gillenormand was at that time fully eighty-four years old. Indignation and clamor on the part of the by-standers. And who did this bold wench think would believe this? What effrontery! What an abominable calumny! Monsieur Gillenormand, however, manifested no anger. He looked upon the bundle with the amiable smile of a man who is flattered by a calumny, and said aside: "Well, what? what is it? what is the matter there? what have we here? you are in a pretty state of amazement, and indeed seem like any ignorant people. The Duke d'Angoulême, natural son of his majesty Charles IX., married at eighty-five a little hussy of fifteen; Monsieur Virginal, Marquis d'Alhuye, brother of Cardinal de Sourdis, Archbishop of Bordeaux, at eighty-three, had, by a chambermaid of the wife of President Jacquin, a son, a true love son, who was a Knight of Malta, and knighted Councillor of State; one of the great men of this century, Abbé Tabarand, was the son of a man eighty-seven years old. These things are any thing but uncommon. And then the Bible! Upon that, I declare that this little gentleman is not mine. But take care of him. It is not his fault. This process was too easy. The creature, she whose name was Magnon, made him a second present the year after. It was a boy again. This time Monsieur Gillenormand capitulated. He sent the two brats back to the mother, engaging to pay eighty francs a month for their support, upon con-

dition that the said mother should not begin again. He added, "I wish the mother to treat them well. I will come to see them from time to time." Which he did. He had had a brother, a priest, who had been for thirty-three years rector of the Academy of Poitiers, and who died at seventy-nine. "*I lost him young,*" said he. This brother, of whom hardly a memory is left, was a quiet miser, who being a priest, felt obliged to give alms to the poor whom he met, but never gave them any thing more than coppers or worn-out sous, finding thus the means of going to Hell by the road to Paradise. As to Monsieur Gillenormand, the elder, he made no trade of alms-giving, but gave willingly and nobly. He was benevolent, abrupt, charitable, and had he been rich, his inclination would have been to be magnificent. He wished that all that concerned him should be done in a large way, even rascalities. One day, having been swindled in an inheritance by a business-man, in a gross and palpable manner, he uttered this solemn exclamation: "Fie! this is not decent! I am really ashamed of these petty cheats. Every thing is degenerate in this century, even the rascals. 'Sdeath! this is not the way to rob a man like me. I am robbed as if in a wood, but meanly robbed. *Silvæ sint consule dignæ!*" He had had, we have said, two wives; by the first a daughter, who had remained unmarried, and by the second another daughter, who died when about thirty years old, and who had married for love, or luck, or otherwise, a soldier of fortune, who had served in the armies of the Republic and the Empire, had won the cross at Austerlitz, and been made colonel at Waterloo. "*This is the disgrace of my family,*" said the old bourgeois. He took a great deal of snuff, and had a peculiar skill in ruffling his lace frill with the back of his hand. He had very little belief in God.

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## VII.

RULE:—NEVER RECEIVE ANY BODY EXCEPT IN THE EVENING.

Such was M. Luke Esprit Gillenormand, who had not lost his hair, which was rather grey than white, and always combed in dog's ears. To sum up, and with all this, a venerable man.

He was of the eighteenth century, frivolous and great.

In 1814, and in the early years of the Restoration, Monsieur Gillenormand, who was still young—he was only seventy-four—had lived in the Faubourg Saint Germain, Rue Servandoni, near Saint Sulpice. He had retired to the Marais only upon retiring from society, after his eighty years were fully accomplished.

And in retiring from society, he had walled himself up in his habits; the principal one, in which he was invariable, was to keep his door absolutely closed by day, and never to receive any body whatever, except in the evening. He dined at five o'clock, then his door was open. This was the custom of his century, and he would not swerve from it. "The day is vulgar," said he, "and only deserves closed shutters. People who are any body light up their wit when the zenith lights up its stars." And he barricaded himself against every body, were it even the king. The old elegance of his time.

## VIII.

## TWO DO NOT MAKE A PAIR.

As to the two daughters of Monsieur Gillenormand, we have just spoken of them. They were born ten years apart. In their youth they resembled each other very little; and in character as well as in countenance, were as far from being sisters as possible. The younger was a cheerful soul, attracted towards every thing that is bright, busy with flowers, poetry and music, carried away into the glories of space, enthusiastic, ethereal, affianced from childhood in the ideal to a dim heroic figure. The elder had also her chimera; in the azure depth she saw a contractor, some good, coarse commissary, very rich, a husband splendidly stupid, a million-made man, or even a prefect; receptions at the prefecture, an usher of the ante-chamber, with the chain on his neck, official balls, harangues at the mayor's, to be "*Madame la préfete*," this whirled in her imagination. The two sisters wandered thus, each in her own fancy, when they were young girls. Both had wings, one like an angel, the other like a goose.

No ambition is fully realized, here below at least. No paradise becomes terrestrial at the period in which we live. The younger had married the man of her dreams, but she was dead. The elder was not married.

At the moment she makes her entry into the story which we are relating, she was an old piece of virtue, an incombustible prude, one of the sharpest noses and one of the most obtuse minds that could be discovered. A characteristic incident: Outside of the immediate family no body had ever known her first name. She was called *Mademoiselle Gillenormand the elder*.

In cant, Mademoiselle Gillenormand the elder could have given odds to an English miss. She was immodestly modest. She had one frightful reminiscence in her life: one day a man had seen her garter.

Age had only increased this pitiless modesty. Her dress front was never thick enough, and never rose high enough. She multiplied hooks and pins where no body thought of looking. The peculiarity of prudery is to multiply sentinels, in proportion as the fortress is less threatened.

However, explain who can these ancient mysteries of innocence, she allowed herself to be kissed without displeasure, by an officer of lancers who was her grand-nephew and whose name was Théodule.

Spice of this favored lancer, the title *Prude*, under which we have classed her, fitted her absolutely. Mademoiselle Gillenormand was a kind of twilight soul. Prudery is half a virtue and half a vice.

To prudery she added bigotry, a suitable lining. She was of the fraternity of the Virgin, wore a white veil on certain feast-days, muttered special prayers, revered "the holy blood," venerated "the sacred heart," remained for hours in contemplation before an old-fashioned Jesuit altar in a chapel closed to the vulgar faithful, and let her soul fly away among the little marble clouds and along the grand rays of gilded wood.

She had a chapel friend, an old maid like herself, called Mademoiselle Vaubois, who was perfectly stupid, and in comparison with whom Ma-



demoiselle Gillenormand had the happiness of being an eagle. Beyond her Agnus Deis and her Ave Marias, Mademoiselle Vaubois had no light except upon the different modes of making sweetmeats. Mademoiselle Vaubois, perfect in her kind, was the ermine of stupidity without a single stain of intelligence.

We must say that in growing old Mademoiselle Gillenormand had rather gained than lost. This is the case with passive natures. She had never been peevish, which is a relative goodness; and then years wear off angles, and the softening of time had come upon her. She was sad with an obscure sadness of which she had not the secret herself. There was in her whole person the stupor of a life ended but never commenced.

She kept her father's house. Monsieur Gillenormand had his daughter with him as we have seen Monseigneur Bienvenu had his sister with him. These households of an old man and an old maid are not rare, and always have the touching aspect of two feeblenesses leaning upon each other.

There was besides in the house, between this old man and this old maid, a child, a little boy, always trembling and mute before M. Gillenormand. M. Gillenormand never spoke to this child but with stern voice, and sometimes with uplifted cane: "*Here! Monsieur—rascal, black-guard, come here! Answer me, rogue! Let me see you, scape-grace!*" etc., etc. He idolized him.

It was his grand-son. We shall see this child again.

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## Book Third.

### THE GRAND-FATHER AND THE GRAND-SON.

#### I.

##### AN OLD SALON.

When M. Gillenormand lived in the Rue Servandoni, he frequented several very fine and very noble salons. Although a bourgeois, M. Gillenormand was welcome. As he was twice witty, first with his own wit, then with the wit which was attributed to him, he was even sought after and lionized. He went no where save on condition of ruling there. There are men who at any price desire influence and to attract the attention of others; where they cannot be oracles, they make themselves laughing-stocks. Monsieur Gillenormand was not of this nature; his dominance in the royalist salons which he frequented cost him none of his self-respect. He was an oracle every where.

About 1817, he always spent two afternoons a week at a house in his neighborhood, in the Rue Férou, that of the Baroness of T——, a worthy and venerable lady, whose husband had been, under Louis XVI., French Ambassador at Berlin. The Baron of T., who, during his life, had devoted himself passionately to ecstasies and magnetic

visions, died in the Emigration, ruined, leaving no fortune but ten manuscript volumes bound in red morocco with gilt edges, of very curious memoirs upon Mesmer and his trough. Madame de T. had not published the memoirs from motives of dignity, and supported herself on a small income, which had survived the flood nobody knows how. Madame de T. lived far from the Court—a *very mixed society*, said she—in a noble, proud and poor isolation. A few friends gathered about her widow's hearth twice a week, and this constituted a pure royalist salon. They took tea, and uttered, as the wind set towards elegy or dithyrambies groans or cries of horror over the century, over the prostitution of the blue ribbon to bourgeois, over the Jacobinism of Louis XVIII.; and they amused themselves in whispers with hopes which rested upon Monsieur, since Charles X.

They hailed the vulgar songs in which Napoleon was called *Nicolas* with transports of joy.

They amused themselves with puns which they thought terrible, with innocent plays upon words which they supposed to be venomous, with quatrains and even distichs.

In this little world they parodied the Revolution. They had some inclination or other which sharpened the same anger in the inverse sense. They sang their little *ça ira* :

Ah ! *ça ira ! ça ira ! ça ira !*  
Les *bonapartist* 'à la lanterne !

Songs are like the guillotine ; they cut indifferently, to-day this head, to-morrow that. It is only a variation.

In the Fualdès affair, which belongs to this time, 1816, they took sides with Bastide and Jausion, because Fualdès was a "*Bonapartist*." They called the liberals, *the brothers and friends* ; this was the highest degree of insult.

Like certain Menageries, the Baroness de T——'s salon had two lions. One was M. Gillenormand, the other was Count de Lamothe Valois, of whom it was whispered, with a sort of consideration : "*Do you know ? He is the Lamothe of the necklace affair*" Parties have such singular amnesties as these.

The Count de Lamothe, who, in 1815, was a man of seventy-five, was remarkable for nothing save his silent and sententious air, his cold, angular face, his perfectly polished manners, his coat buttoned up to his cravat, and his long legs, always crossed in long, loose pantaloons, of the color of burnt sienna. His face was of the color of his pantaloons.

As to M. Gillenormand, his consideration was absolutely for himself alone. He made authority. He had, sprightly as he was, and without detriment to his gaiety, a certain fashion of being, which was imposing, worthy, honorable, and genteelly lofty ; and his great age added to it. A man is not a century for nothing. Years place at last a venerable crown upon his head.

He gave, moreover, some of those repartees which certainly have in them the genuine sparkle. Thus when the King of Prussia, after having restored Louis XVIII., came to make him a visit under the name of Count de Ruppin, he was received by the descendant of Louis XIV somewhat like a Marquis of Brandenburg, and with the most delicate impertinence. Monsieur Gillenormand approved this. "*All kings who*

are not the King of France," said he, "are kings of a province." Sayings of this kind make position for a man.

At an anniversary *Te Deum* for the return of the Bourbons, seeing Mons. de Talleyrand pass he said: "*There goes His Excellency the Bad.*"

M. Gillenormand was usually accompanied by his daughter, this long mademoiselle, then past forty, and seeming fifty, and by a beautiful little boy of seven, white, rosy, fresh-looking, with happy and trustful eyes, who never appeared in this salon without hearing a buzz about him: "How pretty he is! What a pity! poor child!" This child was the boy to whom we have but just alluded. They called him "poor child," because his father was "a brigand of the Loire." \*

This brigand of the Loire was M. Gillenormand's son-in-law, already mentioned, and whom M. Gillenormand called *the disgrace of his family*.

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## II.

### ONE OF THE RED SPECTRES OF THAT TIME.

Whoever, at that day, had passed through the little city of Vernon, and walked over that beautiful monumental bridge which will be very soon replaced, let us hope, by some horrid wire bridge, would have noticed, as his glance fell from the top of the parapet, a man of about fifty, with a leather casque on his head, dressed in pantaloons and waistcoat of coarse grey cloth, to which something yellow was stitched which had been red ribbon, shod in wooden shoes, browned by the sun, his face almost black and his hair almost white, a large scar upon his forehead extending down his cheek, bent, bowed down, older than his years, walking nearly every day with a spade and a pruning knife in his hand, in one of those walled compartments, in the vicinity of the bridge, which, like a chain of terraces, border the left bank of the Seine—charming inclosures full of flowers of which one would say, if they were much larger, they are gardens, and, if they were much smaller, they are bouquets. All these inclosures are bounded by the river on one side and by a house on the other. The man in the waistcoat and wooden shoes of whom we have just spoken lived, about the year 1817, in the smallest of these enclosures, and the humblest of these houses. He lived there solitary and alone, in silence and in poverty, with a woman who was neither young nor old, neither beautiful nor ugly, neither peasant nor bourgeois, who waited upon him. The square of earth which he called his garden, was celebrated in the town for the beauty of the flowers which he cultivated in it. Flowers were his occupation.

By dint of labor, perseverance, attention, and pails of water, he had succeeded in creating after the Creator, and had invented certain tulips and dahlias which seemed to have been forgotten by Nature. He was ingenious; he anticipated Soulange Bodin in the formation of little clumps of heather earth for the culture of rare and precious shrubs from America and China. By break of day, in summer, he was in his walks, digging, pruning, weeding watering, walking in the midst of his flowers

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NOTE.—*Brigands of the Loire*.—This was the nickname given by the French Royalists to the wreck of the French army, which, after the rout of Waterloo, had retreated behind the Loire.—ED.

with an air of kindness, sadness, and gentleness, sometimes dreamy and motionless for whole hours, listening to the song of a bird in a tree, the prattling of a child in a house, or oftener with his eyes fixed on some drop of dew at the end of a spear of grass, of which the sun was making a carbuncle. His table was very frugal, and he drank more milk than wine. An urchin would make him yield, his servant scolded him. He was timid, so much so as to seem unsociable, he rarely went out, and saw nobody but the poor who rapped at his window, and his curé, Abbé Mabeuf, a good old man. Still, if any of the inhabitants of the city or strangers, whoever they might be, curious to see his tulips and roses, knocked at his little house, he opened his door with a smile. This was the brigand of the Loire.

Whoever, at the same time, had read the military memoirs, the biographies, the *Moniteur*, and the bulletins of the Grand Army, would have been struck by a name which appears rather often, the name of George Pontmercy. When quite young, this George Pontmercy was a soldier in the regiment of Saintonge. The Revolution broke out. The regiment of Saintonge was in the Army of the Rhine. For the old regiments of the monarchy kept their province names even after the fall of the monarchy, and were not brigaded until 1749. Pontmercy fought at Spire, at Worms, at Neustadt, at Turkheim, at Alzey, at Mayence where he was one of the two hundred who formed Houchard's rear-guard. He, with eleven others, held their ground against the Prince of Hesse's corps behind the old rampart of Andernach, and only fell back upon the bulk of the army when the hostile cannon had effected a breach from the top of the parapet to the slope of the glacis. He was under Kleber at Marchiennes, and at the battle of Mont Palissel, where he had his arm broken by a musket-ball. Then he passed to the Italian frontier, and he was one of the thirty grenadiers who defended the Col di Tende with Joubert. Joubert was made Adjutant General, and Pontmercy Second Lieutenant. Pontmercy was by the side of Berthier in the midst of the storm of balls on that day of Lodi of which Bonaparte said: *Berthier was cannoneer, cavalier, and grenadier*. He saw his old General, Joubert, fall at Novi, at the moment when, with uplifted sword, he was crying: Forward! Being embarked with his company, through the necessities of the campaign, in a pinnace, which was on the way from Genoa to some little port on the coast, he fell into a wasps'-nest of seven or eight English vessels. The Genoese captain wanted to throw the guns into the sea, hide the soldiers in the hold, and slip through in the dark like a merchantman. Pontmercy had the colors nailed to the ensign staff, and passed proudly under the guns of the British frigates. Fifty miles further on, his boldness increasing, he attacked with his pinnace and captured a large English transport carrying troops to Sicily, so loaded with men and horses that the vessel was full to the hatches. In 1805, he was in that division of Malher which captured Günzburg from the Archduke Ferdinand. At Weltingen he received in his arms under a shower of balls Colonel Maupetit who was mortally wounded at the head of the 9th Dragoons. He distinguished himself at Austerlitz in that wonderful march in echelon under the enemy's fire. When the cavalry of the Russian Imperial Guard crushed a battalion of the 4th of the Line, Pontmercy was one of those who revenged the repulse, and over-

threw the Guard. The Emperor gave him the cross. Pontmercy successively saw Wurmser made prisoner in Mantua, Melas in Alexandria, and Mack in Ulm. He was in the eighth corps, of the Grand Army, which Mortier commanded, and which took Hamburg. Then he passed into the 55th of the Line, which was the old Flanders regiment. At Eylau, he was in the churchyard where the heroic Captain Louis Hugo, uncle of the author of this book, sustained alone with his company of eighty-three men, for two hours, the whole effort of the enemy's army. Pontmercy was one of three who came out of that churchyard alive. He was at Friedland. Then he saw Moscow, then the Beresina, then Lutzen, Bautzen, Dresden, Wachau, Leipsic, and the defiles of Gelnhausen, then Montmirail, Chateau-Thierry, Craon, the banks of the Marne, the banks of the Aisne, and the formidable position at Laon. At Arnay le Duc, a captain, he sabred ten Cossacks, and saved, not his general, but his corporal. He was wounded on that occasion, and twenty-seven splinters were extracted from his left arm alone. Eight days before the capitulation of Paris, he exchanged with a comrade, and entered the cavalry. He had what was called under the old regime *the double-hand*, that is to say equal skill in managing, as a soldier, the sabre or the musket, as an officer, a squadron or a battalion. It is this skill, perfected by military education, which gives rise to certain special arms, the dragoons, for instance, who are both cavalry and infantry. He accompanied Napoleon to the island of Elba. At Waterloo, he led a squadron of cuirassiers in Dubois' brigade. He it was who took the colors from the Lunenburg battalion. He carried the colors to the Emperor's feet. He was covered with blood. He had received, in seizing the colors, a sabre stroke across his face. The Emperor, well pleased, cried to him: *You are a Colonel, you are a Baron, you are an Officer of the Legion of Honor!* Pontmercy answered: *Sire, I thank you for my widow.* An hour afterwards, he fell in the ravine of Ohain. Now who was this George Pontmercy? He was that very brigand of Loire.

We have already seen something of his history. After Waterloo, Pontmercy, drawn out, as will be remembered, from the sunken road of Ohain, succeeded in regaining the army, and was passed along from ambulance to ambulance to the cantonments of the Loire.

The Restoration put him on half-pay, then sent him to a residence, that is to say under surveillance at Vernon. The King, Louis XVIII., ignoring all that had been done in the Hundred Days, recognised neither his position of officer of the Legion of Honor, nor his rank of colonel, nor his title of baron. He, on his part, neglected no opportunity to sign himself *Colonel Baron Pontmercy*. He had only one old blue coat, and he never went out without putting on the rosette of an officer of the Legion of Honor. The *procureur du roi* notified him that he would be prosecuted for "illegally" wearing this decoration. When this notice was given to him by a friendly intermediary, Pontmercy answered with a bitter smile: "I do not know whether it is that I no longer understand French, or you no longer speak it; but the fact is I do not understand you." Then he went out every day for a week with his rosette. Nobody dared to disturb him. Two or three times the minister of war or the general commanding the Department wrote to him with this address: *Monsieur Commandant Pontmercy*. He returned the letters

unopened. At the same time, Napoleon at St. Helena, was treating Sir Hudson Lowe's missives addressed to *General Bonaparte* in the same way. Pontmercy at last, excuse the word, came to have in his mouth the same saliva as his emperor.

So too, there were in Rome a few Carthaginian soldiers, taken prisoners, who refused to bow to Flaminius, and who had a little of Hannibal's soul.

One morning, he met the *procureur du roi* in one of the streets of Vernon, went up to him and said: "Monsieur *procureur du roi*, am I allowed to wear my scar?"

He had nothing but his very scanty half-pay as chief of squadron. He hired the smallest house he could find in Vernon. He lived there alone; how we have just seen. Under the empire, between two wars, he had found time to marry Mademoiselle Gillenormand. The old bourgeois, who really felt outraged, consented with a sigh, saying: "*The greatest families are forced to it.*" In 1815, Madame Pontmercy, an admirable woman in every respect, noble and rare, and worthy of her husband, died, leaving a child. This child would have been the colonel's joy in his solitude; but the grandfather had imperiously demanded his grandson, declaring that, unless he were given up to him, he would disinherit him. The father yielded for the sake of the little boy, and not being able to have his child he set about loving flowers.

He had moreover given up everything, making no movement nor conspiring with others. He divided his thoughts between the innocent things he was doing, and the grand things he had done. He passed his time hoping for a pink or remembering Austerlitz.

M. Gillenormand had no intercourse with his son-in-law. The colonel was to him "a bandit," and he was to the colonel "a blockhead." M. Gillenormand never spoke of the colonel, unless sometimes to make mocking allusions to "his barony." It was expressly understood that Pontmercy should never endeavor to see his son or to speak to him, under pain of the boy being turned away, and disinherited. To the Gillenormand's, Pontmercy was pestiferous. They intended to bring up the child to their liking. The colonel did wrong perhaps to accept these conditions, but submitted to them, thinking that he was doing right, and sacrificing himself alone.

The inheritance from the grand-father Gillenormand was a small affair, but the inheritance of Mlle. Gillenormand the elder was considerable. This aunt, who had remained single, was very rich from the maternal side, and the son of her sister was her natural heir. The child, whose name was Marius, knew that he had a father, but nothing more. No body spoke a word to him about him. However, the society into which his grand-father took him, the whisperings, the hints, the winks, enlightened the little boy's mind at length; he finally comprehended something of it, and as he naturally imbibed, by a sort of infiltration and slow penetration, the ideas and opinions which formed, so to say, the air he breathed, he came little by little to think of his father only with shame and with a closed heart.

While he was thus growing up, every two or three months the colonel would escape, come furtively to Paris like a fugitive from justice breaking his ban, and go to Saint Sulpice, at the hour when Aunt Gillenor-

mand took Marius to mass. These, trembling lest the aunt should turn round, concealed behind a pillar, motionless, not daring to breathe, he saw his child. The scarred veteran was afraid of the old maid.

From this, in fact, came his connection with the curé of Vernon, Abbé Mabeuf.

This worthy priest was the brother of a warden of Saint Sulpice, who had several times noticed this man gazing upon his child, and the scar on his cheek, and the big tears in his eyes. This man, who had so really the appearance of a man, and who wept like a woman, had attracted the warden's attention. This face remained in his memory. One day, having gone to Vernon to see his brother, he met Colonel Pontmercy on the bridge, and recognized the man of Saint Sulpice. The warden spoke of it to the curé, and the two, under some pretext, made the colonel a visit. This visit led to others. The colonel, who at first was very reserved, finally unbosomed himself, and the curé and the warden came to know the whole story, and how Pontmercy was sacrificing his own happiness to the future of his child. The result was that the curé felt a veneration and tenderness for him, and the colonel, on his part, felt an affection for the curé. And, moreover, when it happens that both are sincere and good, nothing will mix and amalgamate more easily than an old priest and an old soldier. In reality, they are the same kind of man. One has devoted himself to his country upon earth, the other to his country in heaven; there is no other difference.

Twice a year, on the first of January and on St. George's day, Marius wrote filial letters to his father, which his aunt dictated, and which, one would have said, were copied from some Complete Letter Writer; this was all that M. Gillenormand allowed; and the father answered with very tender letters, which the grand-father thrust into his pocket without reading.

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### III.

#### REQUIESCANT.

The salon of Madame de T. was all that Marius Pontmercy knew of the world. It was the only opening by which he could look out into life. This opening was sombre, and through this porthole there came more cold than warmth, more night than day. The child, who was nothing but joy and light on entering this strange world, in a little while became sad, and, what is still more unusual at his age, grave. Surrounded by all these imposing and singular persons, he looked about him with a serious astonishment. Every thing united to increase his amazement. There were in Madame de T.'s salon some very venerable, noble old ladies, whose names were Mathan, Noah, Lévis, which was pronounced Lévi, Cambis, which was pronounced Cambyse. These antique faces and these biblical names mingled in the child's mind with his Old Testament, which he was learning by heart, and when they were all present, seated in a circle about a dying fire, dimly lighted by a green-shaded lamp, with their stern profiles, their grey or white hair, their long dresses of another age, in which mournful colors only could

be distinguished, at rare intervals dropping a few words which were at once majestic and austere, the little Marius looked upon them with startled eyes, thinking that he saw, not women, but patriarchs and magi, not real beings, but phantoms.

Among these phantoms were scattered several priests, who frequented this old salon, and a few gentlemen.

At Madame de T.'s, the society being superior, there was exquisite and haughty taste under a full bloom of politeness. Their manners comported with all sorts of involuntary refinements, which were the ancient régime itself, buried, but living. Some of these peculiarities, in language especially, seemed grotesque. Superficial observers would have taken for provincial what was only ancient. They called a woman *Madame la Générale*. *Madame la Colonelle* was not entirely out of use. The charming Madame de Léon, in memory doubtless of the Duchesses de Longueville and de Chevreuse, preferred this appellation to her title of Princess. The Marchioness of Créquy also called herself *Madame la Colonelle*.

It was this little lofty world which invented at the Tuilleries the refinement of always saying when speaking to the King in person, *the King*, in the third person, and never, *your majesty*, the title *your majesty* having been "sullied by the usurper."

Facts and men were judged there. They ridiculed the century, which dispensed with comprehending it. They assisted one another in astonishment. Each communicated to the rest the quantity of light he had. Methuselah instructed Epimenides. The deaf kept the blind informed. They declared that the time since Coblenz had not elapsed. Just as Louis XVIII. was, by the grace of God, in the 25th year of his reign, the Emigres were, in reality, in the twenty-fifth year of their youth.

All was harmonious; nothing was too much alive; speech was hardly a breath; the journal, suiting the salon, seemed a papyrus. There were young people there, but they were slightly dead. In the ante-chamber, the liveries were old. These personages, completely out of date, were served by domestics of the same kind. Altogether, they had the appearance of having lived a long time ago, and of being obstinate with the sepulchre. Conserve, Conservatism, Conservative, was nearly all the dictionary; *to be in good odor*, was the point. There was in fact something aromatic in the opinions of these venerable groups, and their ideas smelt of Indian herbs. It was a mummy world. The masters were embalmed, the valets were stuffed.

A worthy old marchioness, a ruined Emigree, having now but one servant, continued to say: *My people*.

What was done in Madame de T.'s parlor? They were ultra.

The ultras marked the first period of royalism; the assemblage characterized the second. To fervency succeeded skill. Let us not prolong this sketch.

Marius Pontmercy went, like all children, through various studies. When he left the hands of Aunt Gillenormand, his grand-father entrusted him to a worthy professor, of the purest classic innocence. This young, unfolding soul passed from a prude to a pedant. Marius had his years at college, then he entered the law-school. He was royalist, fanatical and austere. He had little love for his grand-father, whose gaiety



and cynicism wounded him, and the place of his father was a dark void. For the rest, he was an ardent but cool lad, noble, generous, proud, religious, lofty; honorable even to harshness, pure even to unsociableness.

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## IV

## END OF THE BRIGAND.

The completion of Marius' classical studies was coincident with M. Gillenormand's retirement from the world. The old man bade farewell to the Faubourg Saint Germain, and to Madame de T.'s salon, and established himself in the Marais, at his house in the Rue des Filles du Calvaire. His servants there were, in addition to the porter, this chambermaid Nicolette, who had succeeded Magnon, and this short-winded and pussy Basque whom we have already mentioned.

In 1827, Marius had just attained his eighteenth year. On coming in one evening, he saw his grand-father with a letter in his hand.

"Marius," said M. Gillenormand, "you will set out to-morrow for Vernon." "What for?" said Marius. "To see your father."

Marius shuddered. He had thought of every thing but this, that a day might come, when he would have to see his father. Nothing could have been more unlooked for, more surprising, and, we must say, more disagreeable. It was aversion compelled to intimacy. It was not chagrin; no, it was pure drudgery.

Marius, besides his feelings of political antipathy, was convinced that his father, the sabrer, as M. Gillenormand called him in his gentler moments, did not love him; that was clear, since he had abandoned him and left him to others. Feeling that he was not loved at all, he had no love. Nothing more natural, said he to himself.

He was so astounded that he did not question M. Gillenormand. The grand-father continued:

"It appears that he is sick. He asks for you." And after a moment of silence he added: "Start to-morrow morning. I think there is at the Cour des Fontaines a conveyance which starts at six o'clock and arrives at night. Take it. He says the case is urgent."

Then he crumpled up the letter and put it in his pocket. Marius could have started that evening and been with his father the next morning. A diligence then made the trip to Rouen from the Rue du Boulo by night, passing through Vernon. Neither M. Gillenormand nor Marius thought of inquiring.

The next day, at dusk, Marius arrived at Vernon. Candles were just beginning to be lighted. He asked the first person he met for *the house of Monsieur Pontmercy*. For in his feelings he agreed with the Restoration, and he, too, recognized his father neither as baron nor as colonel.

The house was pointed out to him. He rang; a woman came and opened the door with a small lamp in her hand. "Monsieur Pontmercy?" said Marius. The woman remained motionless. "Is it here?" asked Marius. The woman gave an affirmative nod of the head. "Can I speak with him?" The woman gave a negative sign. "But I am

his son!" resumed Marius. "He is expecting me." "He expects you no longer," said the woman. Then he perceived that she was in tears.

She pointed to the door of a low room; he entered. In this room, which was lighted by a tallow candle on the mantel, there were three men, one of them standing, one on his knees, and one stripped to his shirt and lying at full length upon the floor. The one upon the floor was the colonel. The two others were a physician and a priest who was praying. The colonel had been three days before attacked with a brain fever. At the beginning of the sickness, having a presentiment of ill, he had written to Monsieur Gillenormand to ask for his son. He had grown worse. On the very evening of Marius' arrival at Vernon, the colonel had had a fit of delirium; he sprang out of his bed in spite of the servant, crying: "My son has not come! I am going to meet him!" Then he had gone out of his room and fallen upon the floor of the hall. He had but just died.

The doctor and the curé had been sent for. The doctor had come too late, the curé had come too late. The son also had come too late. By the dim light of the candle, they could distinguish upon the cheek of the pale and prostrate colonel a big tear which had fallen from his death-stricken eye. The eye was glazed, but the tear was not dry. This tear was for his son's delay.

Marius looked upon this man, whom he saw for the first time, and for the last—this venerable and manly face, these open eyes which saw not, this white hair, these robust limbs upon which he distinguished here and there brown lines which were sabre-cuts, and a species of red stars which were bullet-holes. He looked upon that gigantic scar which imprinted heroism upon this face on which God had impressed goodness. He thought that this man was his father and that this man was dead, and he remained unmoved. The sorrow which he experienced was the sorrow which he would have felt before any other man whom he might have seen stretched out in death.

Mourning, bitter mourning was in that room. The servant was lamenting by herself in a corner, the curé was praying, and his sobs were heard; the doctor was wiping his eyes; the corpse itself wept. This doctor, this priest, and this woman, looked at Marius through their affliction without saying a word; it was he who was the stranger. Marius, too little moved, felt ashamed and embarrassed at his attitude; he had his hat in his hand, he let it fall to the floor, to make them believe that grief deprived him of strength to hold it. At the same time he felt something like remorse, and he despised himself for acting thus. But was it his fault? He did not love his father, indeed!

The colonel left nothing. The sale of his furniture hardly paid for his burial. The servant found a scrap of paper which she handed to Marius. It contained this, in the handwriting of the colonel: "*For my Son.*—The Emperor made me a baron upon the battle-field of Waterloo. Since the Restoration contests this title which I have bought with my blood, my son will take it and bear it. I need not say that he will be worthy of it." On the back, the colonel had added: "At this same battle of Waterloo, a sergeant saved my life. This man's name is Thénardier. Not long ago, I believe he was keeping a little tavern in a

village in the suburbs of Paris, at Chelles or at Montfermeil. If my son meets him, he will do Thénardier all the service he can."

Not from duty towards his father, but on account of that vague respect for death which is always so imperious in the heart of man, Marius took this paper and pressed it. No trace remained of the colonel. Monsieur Gillenormand had his sword and uniform sold to a second-hand dealer. The neighbors stripped the garden and carried off the rare flowers. The other plants became briery and scraggy, and died.

Marius remained only forty-eight hours at Vernon. After the burial, he returned to Paris and went back to his law, thinking no more of his father than if he had never lived. In two days the colonel had been buried, and in three days forgotten. Marius wore crape on his hat. That was all.

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## V

### THE UTILITY OF GOING TO MASS, TO BECOME REVOLUTIONARY.

Marius had preserved the religious habits of his childhood. One Sunday he had gone to hear mass at Saint Sulpice, at this same chapel of the Virgin to which his aunt took him when he was a little boy, and being that day more absent-minded and dreamy than usual, he took his place behind a pillar and knelt down, without noticing it, before a Utrecht velvet chair, on the back of which this name was written: *Monsieur Mabeuf, church-warden*. The mass had hardly commenced when an old man presented himself and said to Marius: "Monsieur, this is my place." Marius moved away readily, and the old man took his chair. After mass, Marius remained absorbed in thought a few steps distant; the old man approached him again and said: "I beg your pardon, Monsieur, for having disturbed you a little while ago, and for disturbing you again now; but you must have thought me impertinent, and I must explain myself." "Monsieur," said Marius, "it is unnecessary." "Yes!" resumed the old man; "I do not wish you to have a bad opinion of me. You see I think a great deal of that place. It seems to me that the mass is better there. Why? I will tell you. To that place I have seen for ten years, regularly, every two or three months, a poor, brave father come, who had no other opportunity and no other way of seeing his child, being prevented through some family arrangements. He came at the hour when he knew his son was brought to mass. The little one never suspected that his father was here. He did not even know, perhaps, that he had a father, the innocent boy! The father, for his part, kept behind a pillar, so that nobody should see him. He looked at his child, and wept. This poor man worshipped this little boy. I saw that. This place has become sanctified, as it were, for me, and I have acquired the habit of coming here to hear mass. I prefer it to the bench, where I have a right to be, as a warden. I was even acquainted slightly with this unfortunate gentleman. He had a father-in-law, a rich aunt, relatives, I do not remember exactly, who threatened to disinherit the child if he, the father, should see him. He had sacrificed himself that his son might some day be rich and

happy. They were separated by political opinions. Certainly I approve of political opinions, but there are people who do not know where to stop. Bless me! because a man was at Waterloo he is not a monster: a father is not separated from his child for that. He was one of Bonaparte's colonels. He is dead, I believe. He lived at Vernon, where my brother is curé, and his name is something like Pontmarie, or Pontmercy. He had a handsome sabre cut." "Pontmercy," said Marius, turning pale. "Exactly; Pontmercy. Did you know him?" "Monsieur," said Marius, "he was my father." The old church-warden clasped his hands, and exclaimed: "Ah! you are the child! Yes, that is it; he ought to be a man now. Well! poor child, you can say that you had a father who loved you well."

Marius offered his arm to the old man, and walked with him to his house. Next day he said to Monsieur Gillenormand: "We have arranged a hunting party with a few friends. Will you permit me to be absent for three days?" "Four," answered the grandfather; "go; amuse yourself." And, with a wink he whispered to his daughter: "Some love affair!"

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## VI.

### WHAT IT IS TO HAVE MET A CHURCH-WARDEN.

Where Marius went we shall see a little further on. Marius was absent three days, then he returned to Paris, went straight to the library of the law-school, and asked for the file of the *Moniteur*. He read the *Moniteur*; he read all the histories of the Republic and the Empire; the *Mémorial de Sainte-Hélène*; all the memoirs, journals, bulletins, proclamations; he devoured everything. The first time he met his father's name in the bulletins of the grand army he had a fever for a whole week. He went to see the generals under whom George Pontmercy had served—among others, Count H. The church-warden, Mabeuf, whom he had gone to see again, gave him an account of the life at Vernon, the colonel's retreat, his flowers and his solitude. Marius came to understand fully this rare, sublime, and gentle man, this sort of lion-lamb who was his father.

In the meantime, engrossed in this study, which took up all his time, as well as all his thoughts, he hardly saw the Gillenormands more. At the hours of meals he appeared; then when they looked for him, he was gone. The aunt grumbled. The grandfather smiled. "Poh, poh! it is the age for the lasses!" Sometimes the old man added: "The devil! I thought that it was some gallantry. It seems to be a passion."

It was a passion, indeed. Marius was on the way to adoration for his father. At the same time an extraordinary change took place in his ideas. The phases of this change were numerous and gradual. As this is the history of many minds of our time, we deem it useful to follow these phases step by step, and to indicate them all.

This history on which he had now cast his eyes, startled him. The first effect was bewilderment. The Republic, the Empire, had been to him, till then, nothing but monstrous words. The Republic, a guillo-

tine in a twilight; the Empire, a sabre in the night. He had looked into them, and there, where he expected to find only a chaos of darkness, he had seen, with a sort of astounding surprise, mingled with fear and joy, stars shining, Mirabeau, Vergniaud, Saint-Just, Robespierre, Camille Desmoulins, Danton, and a sun rising, Napoleon. He knew not where he was. He recoiled, blinded by the splendors. Little by little, the astonishment passed away, he accustomed himself to this radiance; he looked upon acts without dizziness, he examined personages without terror; the Revolution and the Empire set themselves in luminous perspective before his straining eyes; he saw each of these two groups of events and men arrange themselves into two enormous facts: the Republic into the sovereignty of the civic right restored to the masses, the Empire into the sovereignty of the French idea imposed upon Europe; he saw spring out of the Revolution the grand figure of the people, and out of the Empire the grand figure of France. He declared to himself that all that had been good.

What his bewilderment neglected in this first far too synthetic appreciation, we do not think it necessary to indicate here. We are describing the state of a mind upon the march. Progress is not accomplished at a bound. Saying this, once for all, for what precedes as well as for what is to follow, we continue.

He perceived then that up to that time he had comprehended his country no more than he had his father. He had known neither the one nor the other, and he had had a sort of voluntary night over his eyes. He now saw, and on the one hand he admired, on the other he worshipped.

He was full of regret and remorse, and he thought with despair that all he had in his soul he could say now only to a tomb. Oh! if his father were living, if he had had him still, if God in his mercy and in his goodness had permitted that his father might be still alive, how he would have run, how he would have plunged headlong, how he would have cried to his father: "Father! I am here! it is I! my heart is the same as yours! I am your son!" How he would have embraced his white head, wet his hair with tears, gazed upon his scar, pressed his hands, worshipped his garments, kissed his feet! Oh! why had this father died so soon, before the adolescence, before the justice, before the love of his son! Marius had a continual sob in his heart which said at every moment: "Alas!" At the same time he became more truly serious, more truly grave, surer of his faith and his thought. Gleams of the true came at every instant to complete his reasoning. It was like an interior growth. He felt a sort of natural aggrandizement which these two new things, his father and his country, brought to him.

As when one has a key, everything opened; he explained to himself what he had hated, he penetrated what he had abhorred; he saw clearly henceforth the providential, divine, and human meaning of the great things which he had been taught to detest, and the great men whom he had been instructed to curse. When he thought of his former opinions, which were only of yesterday, but which seemed so ancient to him already, he became indignant at himself, and he smiled. From the rehabilitation of his father he had naturally passed to the rehabilitation of Napoleon.

This, however, we must say, was not accomplished without labor.

From childhood he had been imbued with the judgment of the party of 1814 in regard to Bonaparte. Now, all the prejudices of the Restoration, all its interests, all its instincts, tended to the disfigurement of Napoleon. It execrated him still more than it did Robespierre. It made skilful use of the fatigue of the nation and the hatred of mothers. Bonaparte had become a sort of monster almost fabulous, and to depict him to the imagination of the people, which, as we have already said, resembles the imagination of children, the party of 1814 presented in succession every terrifying mask, from that which is terrible, while yet it is grand, to that which is terrible in the grotesque, from Tiberius to Bugaboo. Thus, in speaking of Bonaparte, you might either weep, or burst with laughter, provided hatred was the basis. Marius had never had—about that man, as he was called—any other ideas in his mind. They had grown together with the tenacity of his nature. There was in him a complete little man who was devoted to hatred of Napoleon.

On reading his history, especially in studying it in documents and materials, the veil which covered Napoleon from Marius' eyes gradually fell away. He perceived something immense, and suspected that he had been deceiving himself up to that moment about Bonaparte as well as about every thing else; each day he saw more clearly; and he began to mount slowly, step by step, in the beginning almost with regret, afterwards with rapture, and as if drawn by an irresistible fascination, at first the sombre stages, then the dimly lighted stages, finally the luminous and splendid stages of enthusiasm.

One night he was alone in his little room next the roof. His candle was lighted; he was reading, leaning on his table by the open window. All manner of reveries came over him from the expanse of space and mingled with his thought. What a spectacle is night! We hear dull sounds, not knowing whence they come; we see Jupiter, twelve hundred times larger than the earth, glistening like an ember, the welkin is black, the stars sparkle, it is terror-inspiring.

He was reading the bulletins of the Grand Army, those heroic strophes written on the battle-field; he saw there at intervals his father's name, the Emperor's name every where; the whole of the grand Empire appeared before him; he felt as if a tide were swelling and rising within him; it seemed to him at moments that his father was passing by him like a breath, and whispering in his ear; gradually he grew wandering; he thought he heard the drums, the cannon, the trumpets, the measured tread of the battalions, the dull and distant gallop of the cavalry; from time to time he lifted his eyes to the sky and saw the colossal constellations shining in the limitless abysses, then they fell back upon the book, and saw there other colossal things moving about confusedly. His heart was full. He was transported, trembling, breathless; suddenly, without himself knowing what moved him, or what he was obeying, he arose, stretched his arms out of the window, gazed fixedly into the gloom, the silence, the darkling infinite, the eternal immensity, and cried: *Vive l'empereur!*

From that moment it was all over: the Corsican Ogre—the usurper—the tyrant—the monster—the actor who took lessons from Talma—the prisoner of Jaffa—the tiger—Buonaparte—all this vanished, and gave

place in his mind to a suffused and brilliant radiance in which shone out from an inaccessible height the pale marble phantom of Cæsar. The Emperor had been to his father only the beloved captain, whom one admires, and for whom one devotes himself; to Marius he was something more. He was the predestined constructor of the French group, succeeding the Roman group in the mastery of the world. He was the stupendous architect of a downfall, the successor of Charlemagne, of Louis XI., of Henry IV., of Richelieu, of Louis XIV., and of the Committee of Public Safety, having doubtless his blemishes, his faults, and even his crimes, that is to say being man; but august in his faults, brilliant in his blemishes, mighty in his crimes.

He was the man foreordained to force all nations to say: the Grand Nation. He was better still; he was the very incarnation of France, conquering Europe by the sword which he held, and the world by the light which he shed. Marius saw in Bonaparte the flashing spectre which will always rise upon the frontier, and which will guard the future. Despot, but dictator; despot resulting from a republic and summing up a revolution. Napoleon became to him the people-man as Jesus is the God-man.

We see, like all new converts to a religion, his conversion intoxicated him, he plunged headlong into adhesion, and he went too far. His nature was such; once upon a descent, it was almost impossible for him to hold back. Fanaticism for the sword took possession of him, and became complicated in his mind with enthusiasm for the idea. He did not perceive that along with genius, and indiscriminately, he was admiring force—that is to say, that he was installing in the two compartments of his idolatry, on one side what is divine, and on the other what is brutal. In several respects he began to deceive himself in other matters. He admitted everything. There is a way of meeting error while on the road to truth. He had a sort of wilful implicit faith which swallowed everything in mass. On the new path upon which he had entered, in judging the crimes of the ancient regime as well as in measuring the glory of Napoleon, he neglected the attenuating circumstances.

However this might be, a great step had been taken. Where he had formerly seen the fall of the monarchy, he now saw the advent of France. His pole-star was changed. What had been the setting, was now the rising of the sun. He had turned around.

All these revolutions were accomplished in him without a suspicion of it in his family.

When, in this mysterious labor, he had entirely cast off his old Bourbon and ultra skin, when he had shed the aristocrat, the jacobite, and the royalist, when he was fully revolutionary, thoroughly democratic, and almost republican, he went to an engraver on the Quai des Orfèvres, and ordered a hundred cards bearing this name: *Baron Marius Pontmercy*.

This was but a very logical consequence of the change which had taken place in him—a change in which everything gravitated about his father.

However, as he knew nobody, and could not leave his cards at anybody's door, he put them in his pocket.

By another natural consequence, in proportion as he drew nearer to

his father, his memory, and the things for which the colonel had fought for twenty-five years, he drew off from his grandfather. As we have mentioned, for a long time Gillenormand's capriciousness had been disagreeable to him. There was already between them all the distaste of a serious young man for a frivolous old man. Geronte's gaiety shocks and exasperates Werther's melancholy. So long as the same political opinions and the same ideas had been common to them, Marius had met M. Gillenormand by means of them as if upon a bridge. When this bridge fell, the abyss appeared. And then, above all, Marius felt inexpressibly revolted when he thought that M. Gillenormand, from stupid motives, had pitilessly torn him from the colonel, thus depriving the father of the child, and the child of the father. Through affection and veneration for his father, Marius had almost reached aversion for his grandfather. Nothing of this, however, as we have said, was betrayed externally. Only he was more and more frigid; laconic at meals, and scarcely ever in the house. When his aunt scolded him for it, he was very mild, and gave as an excuse his studies, courts, examinations, dissertations, etc. The grandfather did not change his infallible diagnosis; "In love? I understand it."

Marius was absent for awhile from time to time. "Where can he go to?" asked the aunt. On one of these journeys, which were always very short, he went to Montfermeil in obedience to the injunction which his father had left him, and sought for the former sergeant of Waterloo, innkeeper Thénardier. Thénardier had failed, the inn was closed, and nobody knew what had become of him. While making these researches, Marius was away from the house four days. "Decidedly," said the grandfather, "he is going astray."

They thought they noticed that he wore something, upon his breast and under his shirt, hung from his neck by a black ribbon.

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## VII.

### SOME PETTICOAT.

We have spoken of a lancer. He was a grand-nephew of M. Gillenormand's on the paternal side, who passed his life away from his family, and far from all domestic hearths in garrison. Lieutenant Théodule Gillenormand fulfilled all the conditions required for what is called a handsome officer. He had "the waist of a girl," a way of trailing the victorious sabre, and a curling mustache. He came to Paris very rarely, so rarely that Marius had never seen him. The two cousins knew each other only by name. Théodule was, we think we have mentioned, the favorite of Aunt Gillenormand, who preferred him because she did not see him. Not seeing people permits us to imagine in them every perfection.

One morning, Mlle. Gillenormand the elder, had retired to her room as much excited as her placidity allowed. Marius had asked his grandfather again for permission to make a short journey, adding that he intended to set out that evening. "Go!" the grandfather had answered, and M. Gillenormand had added aside, lifting his eyebrows to the top of



his forehead: "He is getting to be an old offender." Mlle. Gillenormand had returned to her room very much perplexed, dropping this exclamation point on the stairs: "That is pretty!" and this interrogation point: "But where can he be going?" She imagined some more or less illicit affair of the heart, a woman in the shadow, a rendezvous, a mystery, and she would not have been sorry to thrust her spectacles into it. The taste of a mystery resembles the first freshness of a slander; holy souls never despise that. There is in the secret compartments of bigotry some curiosity for scandal. She was therefore a prey to a blind desire for learning a story.

As a diversion from this curiosity which was giving her a little more agitation than she allowed herself, she took refuge in her talents, and began to festoon cotton upon cotton, in one of those embroideries of the time of the Empire and the Restoration in which a great many cab wheels appear. Clumsy work, crabbed worker. She had been sitting in her chair for some hours when the door opened. Mlle. Gillenormand raised her eyes; Lieutenant Théodule was before her making the regulation bow. She uttered a cry of pleasure. You may be old, you may be prude, you may be a bigot, you may be his aunt, but it is always pleasant to see a lancer enter your room.

"You here, Théodule!" exclaimed she. "On my way, aunt." "Embrace me then." "Here goes!" said Théodule. And he embraced her. Aunt Gillenormand went to her secretary, and opened it. "You stay with us at least all the week?" "Aunt, I leave this evening." "Impossible!" "Mathematically." "Stay, my dear Théodule, I beg you." "The heart says yes, but my orders say no. The story is simple. Our station is changed; we were at Melun, we are sent to Gaillon. To go from the old station to the new, we must pass through Paris. I said: 'I am going to go and see my aunt.'" "Take this for your pains." She put ten louis into his hand. "You mean for my pleasure, dear aunt."

Théodule embraced her a second time, and she had the happiness of having her neck a little chafed by the braid of his uniform.

"Do you make the journey on horseback with your regiment?" she asked. "No, aunt. I wanted to see you. I have a special permit. My servant takes my horse; I go by the diligence. And, speaking of that, I have a question to ask you." "What?" "My cousin, Marius Pontmercy, is travelling also, is he?" "How do you know that?" exclaimed the aunt, her curiosity suddenly excited to the quick. "On my arrival, I went to the diligence to secure my place in the coupé." "Well?" "A traveller had already secured a place on the impériale, I saw his name on the book." "What name?" "Marius Pontmercy." "The wicked fellow!" exclaimed the aunt. "Ah! your cousin is not a steady boy like you. To think that he is going to spend the night in a diligence." "Like me." "But for you, it is from duty; for him, it is from dissipation." "What is the odds?" said Théodule.

Here, an event occurred in the life of Mademoiselle Gillenormand the elder; she had an idea. If she had been a man, she would have slapped her forehead. She apostrophised Théodule:

"Are you sure your cousin does not know you?" "Yes. I have seen him; but he has never deigned to notice me." "And you are going

to travel together so?" "He on the impériale, I in the coupé." "Where does this diligence go?" "To Les Andelys." "Is it where Marius is going?" "Unless, like me, he stops on the road. I get off at Vernon to take the branch for Gaillon. I know nothing of Marius' route." "Marius! what an ugly name! What an idea it was to name him Marius! But you at least—your name is Théodule!" "I would rather it were Alfred," said the officer. "Listen, Théodule." "I am listening, aunt." "Pay attention." "I am paying attention." "Are you ready?" "Yes." "Well, Marius is often away." "Eh! Eh!" "He travels." "Ah! ah!" "He sleeps away." "Oh! oh!" "We want to know what is at the bottom of it." Théodule answered with the calmness of a man of bronze: "Some petticoat." And with that stifled chuckle which reveals certainty, he added: "A lass." "That is clear," exclaimed the aunt, who thought she heard Monsieur Gillenormand speak, and who felt her conviction spring irresistibly from this word *lass*, uttered almost in the same tone by the grand-uncle and the grand nephew. She resumed: "Do us a kindness. Follow Marius a little way. He does not know you, it will be easy for you. Since there is a lass, try to see the lass. You can write us the account. It will amuse grandfather."

Théodule had no excessive taste for this sort of watching; but he was much affected by the ten louis, and he thought he saw a possible succession of them. He accepted the commission, and said: "As you please, aunt." And he added aside: "There I am, a duenna." Mademoiselle Gillenormand embraced him. "You would not play such pranks, Théodule. You are obedient to discipline, you are the slave of your orders, you are a scrupulous and dutiful man, and you would not leave your family to go to see such a creature." The lancer put on the satisfied grimace of Cartouche praised for his honesty.

Marius, on the evening which followed this dialogue, mounted the diligence without suspecting that he was watched. As to the watchman, the first thing that he did was to fall asleep. His slumber was sound, and indicated a clear conscience. Argus snored all night.

At daybreak, the driver of the diligence shouted: "Vernon! Vernon relay! passengers for Vernon?" And Lieutenant Théodule awoke. "Good," growled he, half asleep, "here I get off." Then, his memory clearing up by degrees, an effect of awakening, he remembered his aunt, the ten louis, and the account he was to render of Marius's acts and deeds. It made him laugh. "Perhaps he has left the coach," thought he, while he buttoned up his undress waistcoat. "He may have stopped at Poissy; he may have stopped at Triel; if he did not get off at Meulan, he may have got off at Mantes, unless he got off at Rolleboise, or unless he only came to Pacy, with the choice of turning to the left towards Evreux, or to the right towards Laroche Guyon. Run after him, aunt. What the devil shall I write to her, the good old woman?"

At this moment a pair of black pantaloons getting down from the impériale appeared before the window of the coupé. "Can that be Marius?" said the Lieutenant. It was Marius. A little peasant girl, beside the coach, among the horses and postillions, was offering flowers to the passengers. "Flowers for young ladies," cried she. Marius approached her and bought the most beautiful flowers in her basket.

"Now," said Thèodule, leaping down from the coach, "there is something that interests me. Who the deuce is he going to carry those flowers to? It ought to be a mighty pretty woman for so fine a bouquet. I would like to see her." And, no longer now by command, but from personal curiosity, like those dogs who hunt on their own account, he began to follow Marius.

Marius paid no attention to Thèodule. Some elegant women got out of the diligence; he did not look at them. He seemed to see nothing about him. "Is he in love?" thought Thèodule. Marius walked towards the church. "All right," said Thèodule to himself. "The church! that is it. These rendezvous which are spiced with a bit of mass are the best of all."

Arriving at the church, Marius did not go in, but went behind the building. He disappeared at the corner of one of the buttresses of the apsis. "The rendezvous is outside," said Thèodule. "Let us see the lass." And he advanced on tiptoe towards the corner which Marius had turned. On reaching it, he stopped, astounded. Marius, his head in his hands, was kneeling in the grass, upon a grave. He had scattered his bouquet. At the end of the grave, at an elevation which marked the head, there was a black wooden cross, with this name in white letters: COLONEL BARON PONTMERCY. He heard Marius sobbing.

The lass was a tomb.

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## VIII.

### MARBLE AGAINST GRANITE.

It was here that Marius had come the first time that he absented himself from Paris. It was here that he returned every time that M. Gille-normand said: he sleeps out.

Lieutenant Thèodule was absolutely disconcerted by this unexpected encounter with a sepulchre; he experienced a disagreeable and singular sensation which he was incapable of analysing, and which was made up of respect for a tomb mingled with respect for a colonel. He retreated, leaving Marius alone in the churchyard, and there was something of discipline in this retreat. Death appeared to him with huge epauletts, and he gave him almost a military salute. Not knowing what to write to his aunt, he decided to write nothing at all; and probably nothing would have resulted from the discovery made by Thèodule in regard to Marius' amours, had not, by one of those mysterious arrangements so frequently accidental, the scene at Vernon been almost immediately followed by a sort of counter-blow at Paris.

Marius returned from Vernon early in the morning of the third day, was set down at his grandfather's, and, fatigued by the two nights passed in the diligence, feeling the need of making up for his lack of sleep by an hour at the swimming school, ran quickly up to his room, took only time enough to lay off his travelling coat and the black ribbon which he wore about his neck, and went away to the bath.

M. Gillenormand, who had risen early like all old persons who are in good health, had heard him come in, and hastened as fast as he could with his old legs, to climb to the top of the stairs where Marius' room was, that he might embrace him, question him while embracing him, and find out something about where he came from. But the youth had taken less time to go down than the octogenarian to go up, and when Grandfather Gillenormand entered the garret room, Marius was no longer there.

The bed was not disturbed, and upon the bed were displayed without distrust the coat and the black ribbon. "I like that better," said M. Gillenormand. And a moment afterwards he entered the parlor where Mademoiselle Gillenormand the elder was already seated, embroidering her cab wheels. The entrance was triumphal. M. Gillenormand held in one hand the coat and in the other the neck ribbon, and cried: "Victory! We are going to penetrate the mystery! we shall know the end of the end, we shall feel of the libertinism of our trickster! here we are with the romance even. I have the portrait!" In fact, a black shagreen box, much like to a medallion, was fastened to the ribbon. The old man took this box and looked at it some time without opening it, with that air of desire, ravishment, and anger, with which a poor, hungry devil sees an excellent dinner pass under his nose, when it is not for him. "For it is evidently a portrait. I know all about that. This is worn tenderly upon the heart. What fools they are! Some abominable quean, enough to make one shudder probably! Young folks have such bad taste in these days!" "Let us see, father," said the old maid.

The box opened by pressing a spring. They found nothing in it but a piece of paper carefully folded. "*From the same to the same,*" said M. Gillenormand, bursting with laughter. "I know what that is. A love-letter!" "Ah! then let us read it!" said the aunt. And she put on her spectacles. They unfolded the paper and read this:

"*For my Son.*—The Emperor made me a baron upon the battle-field of Waterloo. Since the Restoration contests this title which I have bought with my blood, my son will take it and bear it. I need not say that he will be worthy of it."

The feelings of the father and daughter cannot be described. They felt chilled as by the breath of a death's head. They did not exchange a word. M. Gillenormand, however, said in a low voice, and as if talking to himself: "It is the handwriting of that sabrer." The aunt examined the paper, turned it on all sides, then put it back in the box.

Just at that moment, a little oblong package, wrapped in blue paper, fell from a pocket of the coat. Mademoiselle Gillenormand picked it up and unfolded the blue paper. It was Marius' hundred cards. She passed one of them to M. Gillenormand, who read: *Baron Marius Pontmercy.*

The old man rang. Nicolette came. M. Gillenormand took the ribbon, the box and the coat, threw them all on the floor in the middle of the parlor, and said: "Take away those things." A full hour passed in complete silence. The old man and the old maid sat with their backs turned to one another, and were probably, each on their side, thinking over the same things. At the end of that hour, aunt Gillenormand said: "Pretty!" A few minutes afterwards, Marius made his appear-

ance. He came in. Even before crossing the threshold of the parlor, he perceived his grandfather holding one of his cards in his hand, who, on seeing him, exclaimed with his crushing air of sneering, bourgeois superiority: "Stop! stop! stop! stop! stop! you are a baron now. I present you with my compliments. What does this mean?" Marius colored slightly, and answered: "It means that I am my father's son." M. Gillenormand checked his laugh, and said harshly: "Your father; I am your father." "My father," resumed Marius with downcast eyes and stern manner, "was a humble and heroic man, who served the Republic and France gloriously, who was great in the greatest history that men have ever made, who lived a quarter of a century in the camp, by day under grape and under balls, by night in the snow, in the mud, and in the rain, who captured colors, who received twenty wounds, who died forgotten and abandoned, and who had but one fault; that was in loving too dearly two ingrates, his country and me."

This was more than M. Gillenormand could listen to. At the word *Republic*, he rose, or rather, sprang to his feet. Every one of the words which Marius had pronounced, had produced the effect upon the old royalist's face, of a blast from a bellows upon a burning coal. From dark he had become red, from red purple, and from purple glowing. "Marius!" exclaimed he, "abominable child! I don't know what your father was! I don't want to know! I know nothing about him, and I don't know him! but what I do know is, that there was never any thing but miserable wretches among all that rabble! that they were all beggars, assassins, red caps, thieves! I say all! I say all! I know nobody! I say all! do you hear, Marius? Look you, indeed, you are as much a baron as my slipper! they were all bandits who served Robespierre! all brigands who served B-u-o-naparte! all traitors who betrayed, betrayed, betrayed! their legitimate king! all cowards who ran from the Prussians and English at Waterloo! That is what I know. If your father is among them I don't know him, I am sorry for it, so much the worse, you servant!"

In his turn, Marius now became the coal, and M. Gillenormand the bellows. Marius shuddered in every limb, he knew not what to do, his head burned. He was the priest who sees all his wafers thrown to the winds, the fakir who sees a passer-by spit upon his idol. He could not allow such things to be said before him unanswered. But what could he do? His father had been trodden under foot and stamped upon in his presence, but by whom? by his grandfather. How should he avenge the one without outraging the other? It was impossible for him to insult his grandfather, and it was equally impossible for him not to avenge his father. On one hand a sacred tomb, on the other white hairs. He was for a few moments dizzy and staggering with all this whirlwind in his head; then he raised his eyes, looked straight at his grandfather, and cried in a thundering voice: "Down with the Bourbons, and that great hog Louis XVIII!" Louis XVIII. had been dead for four years; but it was all the same to him.

The old man, scarlet as he was, suddenly became whiter than his hair. He turned towards a bust of the Duke de Berry which stood upon the mantel, and bowed to it profoundly with a sort of peculiar majesty. Then he walked twice, slowly and in silence, from the fire-

place to the window and from the window to the fireplace, traversing the whole length of the room and making the floor crack as if an image of stone were walking over it. The second time, he bent towards his daughter, who was enduring the shock with the stupor of an aged sheep, and said to her with a smile that was almost calm: "A baron like Monsieur and a bourgeois like me cannot remain under the same roof." And all at once straightening up, pallid, trembling, terrible, his forehead swelling with the fearful radiance of anger, he stretched his arm towards Marius and cried to him: "Be off!" Marius left the house. The next day M. Gillenormand said to his daughter: "You will send sixty pistoles every six months to this blood-drinker, and never speak of him to me again."

Having an immense residuum of fury to expend, and not knowing what to do with it, he spoke to his daughter with coldness for more than three months.

Marius, for his part, departed in indignation. A circumstance which we must mention, had aggravated his exasperation still more. There are always such little fatalities complicating domestic dramas. Feelings are embittered by them, although in reality the faults are none the greater. In hurriedly carrying away, at the old man's command, Marius' "things" to his room, Nicolette had, without perceiving it, dropped, probably on the garret stairs, which were dark, the black shagreen medallion which contained the paper written by the colonel. Neither the paper nor the medallion could be found. Marius was convinced that "Monsieur Gillenormand"—from that day forth he never named him otherwise—had thrown "his father's will" into the fire. He knew by heart the few lines written by the colonel, and consequently nothing was lost. But the paper, the writing, that sacred relie, all that was his heart itself. What had been done with it?

Marius went away without saying where he was going, and without knowing where he was going, with thirty francs, his watch, and a few clothes in a carpet bag. He hired a cabriolet by the hour, jumped in, and drove at random towards the Latin Quarter.

What was Marius to do?

## Book Fourth.

### THE FRIENDS OF THE A B C.

#### I

#### A GROUP WHICH ALMOST BECAME HISTORIC.

At that period, apparently indifferent, something of a revolutionary thrill was vaguely felt. Whispers coming from the depths of '89 and '92 were in the air. Young Paris was, excuse the expression, in the process of moulting. People were transformed almost without suspecting it, by the very movement of the time. The hand which moves

over the dial moves also among souls. Each one took the step forward which was before him: Royalists became liberals, liberals became democrats.

It was like a rising tide, complicated by a thousand ebbs; the peculiarity of the ebb is to make mixtures; thence very singular combinations of ideas; men worshipped at the same time Napoleon and liberty. We are now writing history. These were the mirages of that day. Opinions pass through phases. Voltairian royalism, a grotesque variety, had a fellow not less strange, Bonapartist liberalism.

Other groups of minds were more serious. They fathomed principle; they attached themselves to right. They longed for the absolute, they caught glimpses of the infinite realizations; the absolute, by its very rigidity, pushes the mind towards the boundless, and makes it float in the illimitable. There is nothing like dream to create the future. Utopia to-day, flesh and blood to-morrow.

Advanced opinions had double foundations. The appearance of mystery threatened "the established order of things," which was sullen and suspicious—a sign in the highest degree revolutionary. The reservations of power meet the reservations of the people in the sap. The incubation of insurrections replies to the plotting of *coups d'état*.

At that time there were not yet in France any of those underlying organizations like the German Tugendbund and the Italian Carbonari; but here and there obscure excavations were branching out. La Cougourde was assuming form at Aix; there was in Paris, among other affiliations of this kind, the Society of the Friends of the A B C.

Who were the Friends of the A B C? A society having as its aim, in appearance, the education of children; in reality, the elevation of men.

They declared themselves the Friends of the A B C\* The *abaissé* (the abased) were the people. They wished to raise them up. A pun at which you should not laugh. Puns are sometimes weighty in politics; witness the *Castratus ad castra*, which made Narses a general of an army; witness *Barbari et Barberini*; witness *Fucros y Fuegos*; witness *Tu es Petrus et super hanc Petram*, etc., etc.

The Friends of the A B C were not numerous, it was a secret society in the embryonic state; we should almost say a coterie, if coteries produced heroes. They met in Paris, at two places, near the Halles, in a wine shop called *Corinthe*, which will be referred to hereafter, and near the Pantheon, in a little coffee-house on the Place Saint Michel, called *Le Café Musain*, now torn down; the first of these two places of rendezvous was near the working-men, the second near the students.

The ordinary conventicles of the Friends of the A B C were held in a back room of the Café Musain. This room, quite distant from the café, with which it communicated by a very long passage, had two windows, and an exit by a private stairway upon the little Rue des Grès. They smoked, drank, played and laughed there. They talked very loud about every thing, and in whispers about something else. On the wall was nailed, an indication sufficient to awaken the suspicion of a police officer, an old map of France under the Republic.

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*A B C*, in French, is pronounced ah-bay-say, exactly like the French word *abaissé*.

Most of the Friends of the A B C were students, in thorough understanding with a few working-men. The names of the principal are as follows. They belong to a certain extent to history: Enjolras, Combeferre, Jean Prouvaire, Feuilly, Courneyrac, Bahorel, Lesgle or Laigle, Joly, Graaie.

These young men constituted a sort of family among themselves, by force of friendship. All except Laigle were from the South.

This was a remarkable group. It has vanished into the invisible depths which are behind us. At the point of this drama which we have now reached, it may not be useless to throw a ray of light upon these young heads before the reader sees them sink into the shadow of a tragic fate.

Enjolras, whom we have named first, the reason why will be seen by-and-by, was an only son and was rich. Enjolras was a charming young man, who was capable of being terrible. He was angelically beautiful. He was Antinous wild. You would have said, to see the thoughtful reflection of his eye, that he had already, in some preceding existence, passed through the revolutionary Apocalypse. He had the tradition of it like an eye-witness. He knew all the little details of the grand thing, a pontifical and warrior nature, strange in a youth. He was officiating and militant; from the immediate point of view, a soldier of democracy; above the movement of the time, a priest of the ideal. He had a deep eye, lids a little red, thick under lip, easily becoming disdainful, and a high forehead. Much forehead in a face is like much sky in a horizon. Like certain young men of the beginning of this century and the end of the last century, who became illustrious in early life, he had an exceedingly youthful look, as fresh as a young girl's, although he had hours of pallor. He was now a man, but he seemed a child still. His twenty-two years of age appeared seventeen; he was serious, he did not seem to know that there was on the earth a being called woman. He had but one passion, the right; but one thought, to remove all obstacles. Upon Mount Aventine, he would have been Gracchus; in the Convention, he would have been Saint Just. He hardly saw the roses, he ignored the Spring, he did not hear the birds sing; Evadne's bare bosom would have moved him no more than Aristogiton; to him, as to Harmodius, flowers were good only to hide the sword. He was severe in his pleasures. Before every thing but the Republic, he chastely dropped his eyes. He was the marble lover of liberty. His speech was roughly inspired and had the tremor of a hymn. He astonished you by his soaring. Woe to the love affair that should venture to intrude upon him! Had any grisette of the Place Cambrai or the Rue Saint Jean de Beauvais, seeing this college boy's face, this form of a page, those long, fair lashes, those blue eyes, that hair flying in the wind, those rosy cheeks, those pure lips, those exquisite teeth, felt a desire to taste all this dawn, and tried her beauty upon Enjolras, a surprising and terrible look would have suddenly shown her the great gulf, and taught her not to confound with the gallant cherubin of Beaumarchais the fearful cherubim of Ezekiel.

Beside Enjolras who represented the logic of the Revolution, Combeferre represented its philosophy. Between the logic of the Revolution and its philosophy, there is this difference—that its logic could



conclude with war, while its philosophy could only end in peace. Combeferre completed and corrected Enjolras. He was lower and broader. His desire was to instil into all minds the broad principles of general ideas ; he said : ‘ Revolution, but civilization ;’ and about the steep mountain he spread the vast blue horizon. Hence, in all Combeferre’s views, there was something attainable and practicable. Revolution with Combeferre was more respirable than with Enjolras. Enjolras expressed its divine right, and Combeferre its natural right. The first went as far Robespierre ; the second stopped at Condorcet. Combeferre more than Enjolras lived the life of the world generally. Had it been given to these two young men to take a place in history, one would have been the upright man, the other would have been the wise man. Enjolras was more manly, Combeferre was more humane. *Homo* and *Vir* indeed express the exact shade of difference. Combeferre was gentle, as Enjolras was severe, from natural purity. He loved the word citizen, but he preferred the word man. He would have gladly said : *Hombre*, like the Spaniards. He read everything, went to the theatres, attended the public lectures, learned the polarisation of light from Arago, was enraptured with a lecture in which Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire had explained the double function of the exterior carotid artery and the interior carotid artery, one of which supplies the face, the other the brain ; he kept pace with the times, followed science step by step, confronted Saint Simon with Fourier, deciphered hieroglyphics, broke the pebbles which he found and talked about geology, drew a moth-butterfly from memory, pointed out the mistakes in French in the dictionary of the Academy, studied Puységur and Deleuze, affirmed nothing, not even miracles ; denied nothing, not even ghosts ; looked over the files of the *Moniteur*, reflected. He declared the future was in the hands of the school-master, and busied himself with questions of education. He desired that society should work without ceasing at the elevation of the intellectual and moral level ; at the coming of knowledge, at bringing ideas into circulation, at the growth of the mind in youth ; and he feared that the poverty of the methods then in vogue, the meanness of a literary world which was circumscribed by two or three centuries, called classical, the tyrannical dogmatism of official pedants, scholastic prejudices and routine, would result in making artificial oyster-beds of our colleges. He was learned, purist, precise, universal, a hard student, and at the same time given to musing, ‘ even chimerical,’ said his friends. He believed in all the dreams : railroads, the suppression of suffering in surgical operations, the fixing of the image in the camera obscura, the electric telegraph, the steering of balloons. Little dismayed, moreover, by the citadels built upon all sides against the human race by superstitions, despotisms, and prejudices, he was one of those who think that science will at last turn the position. Enjolras was a chief ; Combeferre was a guide. You would have preferred to fight with the one and to march with the other. Not that Combeferre was not capable of fighting, he did not refuse to close with an obstacle, and to attack it by main strength and by explosion, but to put gradually, by the teaching of axioms and the promulgation of positive laws, the human race in harmony with its destinies, pleased him better ; and of the two lights, his inclination was not for conflagration. A fire would cause a dawn, un-

doubtedly, but why not wait for the break of day? A volcano enlightens, but the morning enlightens still better. Combeferre, perhaps, preferred the pure radiance of the beautiful to the glory of the sublime. A light disturbed by smoke, an advance purchased by violence, but half satisfied his tender and serious mind. A headlong plunge of a people into the truth, a '93, startled him; still stagnation repelled him yet more, in it he felt putrefaction and death; on the whole, he liked foam better than miasma, and he preferred the torrent to the cess-pool, and the Falls of Niagara to the Lake of Montfaucon. In short, he desired neither halt nor haste. While his tumultuous friends, chivalrously devoted to the absolute, adored and asked for splendid revolutionary adventures, Combeferre inclined to let progress do her work—the good progress; cold, perhaps, but pure; methodical, but irreproachable; phlegmatic, but imperturbable. Combeferre would have knelt down and clasped his hands, asking that the future might come in all its radiant purity, and that nothing might disturb the unlimited virtuous development of the people. ‘*The good must be innocent,*’ he repeated incessantly. And in fact, if it is the grandeur of the revolution to gaze steadily upon the dazzling ideal, and to fly to it through the lightnings, with blood and fire in its talons, it is the beauty of progress to be without a stain; and there is between Washington, who represents the one, and Danton, who incarnates the other, the difference which separates the angel with the wings of a swan, from the angel with the wings of an eagle.

Jean Prouvaire was yet a shade more subdued than Combeferre. He called himself Jehan, from that little momentary fancifulness which mingled with the deep and powerful movement from which arose the study of the Middle Ages, then so necessary. Jean Prouvaire was addicted to love; he cultivated a pot of flowers, played on a flute, made verses, loved the people, mourned over woman, wept over childhood, confounded the future and God in the same faith, and blamed the Revolution for having cut off a royal head, that of Andre Chenier. His voice was usually delicate, but at times suddenly became masculine. He was well read, even to erudition, and almost an orientalist. Above all, he was good, and a very natural thing to one who knows how near goodness borders on grandeur, in poetry he preferred the grand. He understood Italian, Latin, Greek and Hebrew; and that served him only to read four poets: Dante, Juvenal, Æschylus, and Isaiah. In French, he preferred Corneille to Racine, and Agrippa d’Aubigne to Corneille. He was fond of strolling in fields of wild oats and blue-bells, and paid almost as much attention to the clouds as to passing events. His mind had two attitudes—one towards man, the other towards God; he studied, or he contemplated. All day he pondered over social questions: wages, capital, credit, marriage, religion, liberty of thought, liberty of love, education, punishment, misery, association, property, production and distribution, the lower enigma which covers the human ant-hill with a shadow; and at night he gazed upon the stars, those enormous beings. Like Enjolras, he was rich, and an only son. He spoke gently, bent his head, cast down his eyes, smiled with embarrassment, dressed badly, had an awkward air, blushed at nothing, was very timid, still intrepid.

Feuilly was a fan-maker, an orphan, who with difficulty earned three francs a day, and who had but one thought, to deliver the world. He had still another desire—to instruct himself; which he also called deliverance. He had taught himself to read and write; all that he knew, he had learned alone. Feuilly was a generous heart. He had an immense embrace. This orphan had adopted the people. Being without a mother he meditated upon his mother country. He was not willing that there should be any man upon the earth without a country. He nurtured within himself, with the deep divination of the man of the people, what we now call *the idea of nationality*. He had learned history expressly that he might base his indignation upon a knowledge of its cause. In this new upper room of utopists particularly interested in France, he represented the foreign nations. His specialty was Greece, Poland, Hungary, the Danubian Provinces, and Italy. He uttered these names incessantly, in season and out of season, with the tenacity of the right Turkey upon Greece and Thessaly, Russia upon Warsaw, Austria upon Venice, these violations exasperated him. The grand highway robbery of 1772 excited him above all. There is no more sovereign eloquence than the truth in indignation; he was eloquent with this eloquence. He was never done with that infamous date 1772, that noble and valiant people blotted out by treachery, that threefold crime that monstrous ambushade, prototype and pattern of all those terrible suppressions of states which, since, have stricken several noble nations, and have, so to say, erased the period of their birth. All the cotemporary assaults upon society date from the partition of Poland. The partition of Poland is a theorem of which all the present political crimes are corollaries. Not a despot, not a traitor, for a century past, who has not visé, confirmed, countersigned, and set his initials to, *ne varietur*, the partition of Poland. When you examine the list of modern treasons, that appears first of all. The Congress of Vienna took advice of this crime before consummating its own. The halloo was sounded by 1772, 1815 is the quarry. Such was the usual text of Feuilly. This poor working man had made himself a teacher of justice, and she rewarded him by making him grand. For there is in fact eternity in the right. Warsaw can no more be Tartar than Venice can be Teutonic. The kings lose their labor at this, and their honor. Sooner or later, the submerged country floats to the surface and reappears. Greece again becomes Greece, Italy again becomes Italy. The protest of the right against the fact, persists for ever. The robbery of a people never becomes prescriptive. These lofty swindles have no future. You cannot pick the mark out of a nation as you can out of a handkerchief.

Courfeyrac had a father whose name was M. de Courfeyrac. One of the false ideas of the Restoration in point of aristocracy and nobility was its faith in the particle. The particle, we know, has no significance. But the bourgeois of the time of *La Minerve* considered this poor *de* so highly that men thought themselves obliged to renounce it. M. de Chauvelin called himself M. Chauvelin, M. de Caumartin, M. Caumartin, M. de Constant de Rebecque, Benjamin Constant, M. de Lafayette, M. Lafayette. De Courfeyrac did not wish to be behind, and called himself briefly Courfeyrac.

We might almost, in what concerns Courfeyrac, stop here, and con-

tent ourselves with saying as to the remainder: Courfeyrac, see Tholomyès. Courfeyrac had in fact that youthful animation which we might call the diabolic beauty of the mind. In later life, this dies out, like the playfulness of the kitten, and all that grace ends, on two feet in the bourgeois, and on four paws in the mouser.

This style of mind is transmitted from generation to generation of students, passed from hand to hand by the successive growths of youth, *quasi cursores*, nearly always the same: so, that, as we have just indicated, any person who had listened to Courfeyrac in 1828, would have thought he was hearing Tholomyès in 1817. Courfeyrac only was a brave fellow. Beneath the apparent similarities of the exterior mind, there was great dissimilarity between Tholomyès and him. The latent man which existed in each was in the first altogether different from what it was in the second. There was in Tholomyès an attorney, and in Courfeyrac a paladin.

Enjolras was the chief, Combeferre was the guide, Courfeyrac was the centre. The others gave more light, he gave more heat; the truth is, that he had all the qualities of a centre, roundness and radiance.

Bahorel was a creature of good humor and bad company, brave, a spendthrift, prodigal almost to generosity, talkative almost to eloquence, bold almost to effrontery; the best possible devil's-pie; with fool-hardy waistcoats and scarlet opinions; a wholesale blusterer, that is to say, liking nothing so well as a quarrel unless it were an émeute, and nothing so well as an émeute unless it were a revolution; always ready to break a paving stone, then to tear up a street, then to demolish a government, to see the effect of it; a student of the eleventh year. He had adopted for his motto: *never a lawyer*, and for his coat of arms a bedroom table on which you might discern a square cap. Whenever he passed by the law-school, which rarely happened, he buttoned up his overcoat, the paletot was not yet invented, and he took hygienic precautions. He said of the porter of the school: what a fine old man! and of the dean, M. Delvineourt: what a monument! He saw in his studies subjects for ditties, and in his professors opportunities for caricatures. He ate up in doing nothing a considerable allowance, something like three thousand francs. His parents were peasants, in whom he had succeeded in inculcating a respect for their son. He said of them: 'They are peasants and not bourgeois; which explains their intelligence.'

Bahorel, a capricious man, was scattered over several cafés; the others had habits, he had none. He loafed. To err is human. To loaf is Parisian. At bottom, a penetrating mind and more of a thinker than he seemed. He served as a bond between the Friends of the A B C and some other groups which were without definite shape, but which were to take form afterwards.

In this conclave of young heads there was one bald member. The Marquis d'Avary, whom Louis XVIII. made a duke for having helped him into a cab the day that he emigrated, related that in 1814, on his return to France, as the King landed at Calais, a man presented a petition to him. 'What do you want?' said the King. 'Sire, a post-office.' 'What is your name?' 'L'Aigle.' [*The eagle.*]

The King scowled, looked at the signature of the petition and saw

the name written thus: LESGLE. This orthography, anything but Bonapartist, pleased the King, and he began to smile. 'Sire,' resumed the man with the petition, 'my ancestor was a dog-trainer surnamed Lesgueules. [The Chaps.] This surname has become my name. My name is Lesgueules, by contraction Lesgle, and by corruption L'Aigle.' This made the King finish his smile. He afterwards gave the man the post-office at Meaux, either intentionally or inadvertently.

The bald member of the club was son of this Lesgle, or Lègle, and signed his name Lègle (de Meaux.) His comrades, for the sake of brevity, called him Bossuet.\*

Bossuet was a cheery fellow who was unlucky. His specialty was to succeed in nothing. On the other hand, he laughed at everything. At twenty-five he was bald. His father had died owning a house and some land; but he, the son, had found nothing more urgent than to lose this house and land in a bad speculation. He had nothing left. He had considerable knowledge and wit, but he always miscarried. Everything failed him, everything deceived him; whatever he built up fell upon him. If he split wood, he cut his finger. If he had a mistress, he very soon discovered that he had also a friend. Every moment some misfortune happened to him; hence his jovialty. He said: *I live under the roof of the falling tiles*. Rarely astonished, since he was always expecting some accident, he took ill luck with serenity and smiled at the vexations of destiny like one who hears a jest. He was poor, but his fund of good-humor was inexhaustible. He soon reached his last sou, never his last burst of laughter. When met by adversity, he saluted that acquaintance cordially, he patted catastrophies on the back; he was so familiar with fatality as to call it by its nickname.—'Good morning, old Genius,' he would say.

These persecutions of fortune had made him inventive. He was full of resources. He had no money, but he found means, when it seemed good to him, to go to 'reckless expenses.'

Bossuet was slowly making his way towards the legal profession; he was doing his law in the manner of Bahorel. Bossuet had never much domicile, sometimes none at all. He lodged sometimes with one, sometimes with another, oftenest with Joly. Joly was studying medicine. He was two years younger than Bossuet.

Joly was a young Malade Imaginaire. What he had learned in medicine was rather to be a patient than a physician. At twenty-three he thought himself a valetudinarian, and passed his time in looking at his tongue in a mirror. He declared that man is a magnet, like the needle, and in his room he placed his bed with the head to the south and the foot to the north, so that at night the circulation of the blood should not be interfered with by the grand magnetic current of the globe. In stormy weather he felt his pulse. Nevertheless, the gayest of all. All these incoherences, young, national, sickly, joyous, got along very well

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Jacques-Bénigne BOSSUET, Bishop of Meaux, one of the most celebrated writers of the age of Louis XIV. He was a profound theologian, a keen logician, and beyond any doubt the most eloquent pulpit orator France can boast of. He was surnamed by his contemporaries *L'aigle de Meaux*. (The eagle of Meaux.)  
EDIT.

together, and the result was an eccentric and agreeable person whom his comrades, prodigal of consonants, called Jollilly. "You can fly upon four L's," [*ailes*, wings] said Jean Prouvaire. Joly had the habit of rubbing his nose with the end of his cane, which is an indication of a sagacious mind.

All these young men, diverse as they were, and of whom, as a whole, we ought only to speak seriously, had the same religion: Progress. All were legitimate sons of the French Revolution. The lightest became solemn when pronouncing this date: '89. Their fathers, according to the flesh, were, or had been, Feuillants, Royalists, Doctrinaires; it mattered little; this burly-burly which antedated them, had nothing to do with them; they were young; the pure blood of principles flowed in their veins. They attached themselves without an intermediate shade to incorruptible right and to absolute duty. Affiliated and initiated, they secretly sketched out their ideas.

Among all these passionate hearts and all these undoubting minds there was one sceptic. How did he happen to be there? from juxtaposition. The name of this sceptic was Grantaire, and he usually signed with this rebus: R [*grand R*, great R]. Grantaire was a man who took good care not to believe anything. He was, moreover, one of the students who had learned most during their course in Paris; he knew that the best coffee was at the Café Lemblin, and the best billiard table at the Café Voltaire; that you could find good rolls and good girls at the hermitage on the Boulevard du Maine, broiled chickens at Mother Saguet's, excellent chowders at the Barrière de la Cunette, and a peculiar light white wine at the Barrière du Combat. He knew the good places for everything; furthermore, boxing, tennis, a few dances, and he was a profound cudgel-player. A great drinker to boot. He was frightfully ugly; the prettiest shoe-binder of that period, Irma Boissy, revolting at his ugliness, had uttered this sentence: "*Grantaire is impossible*;" but Grantaire's self conceit was not disconcerted. He looked tenderly and fixedly upon every woman, appearing to say to them all: *if I only would*; and trying to make his comrades believe that he was in general demand.

All these words: rights of the people, rights of man, social contract, French Revolution, republic, democracy, humanity, civilization, religion, progress, were, to Grantaire, very nearly meaningless. He smiled at them. Scepticism, that carries of the intellect, had not left one entire idea in his mind. He lived in irony. This was his axiom: There is only one certainty, my full glass. He ridiculed all devotion, under all circumstances, in the brother as well as the father, in Robespierre the younger as well as Loizerolles. "They were very forward to be dead," he exclaimed. He said of the cross: "There is a gibbet which has made a success." A rover, a gambler, a libertine, and often drunk, he displeased these young thinkers by singing incessantly: "*I love the girls and I love good wine.*" Air: *Vive Henri IV.*

Still, this sceptic had a fanaticism. This fanaticism was neither an idea, nor a dogma, nor an art, nor a science; it was a man: Enjolras. Grantaire admired, loved, and venerated Enjolras. To whom did this anarchical doubter ally himself in this phalanx of absolute minds? To the most absolute. It what way did Enjolras subjugate him? By

ideas? No. By character. A phenomenon often seen. A sceptic adhering to a believer; that is as simple as the law of the complementary colors. What we lack attracts us. Nobody loves the light like the blind man. The dwarf adores the drum-major. The toad is always looking up at the sky; why? To see the bird fly. Grantaire, in whom doubt was creeping, loved to see faith soaring in Enjolras. He had need of Enjolras. Without understanding it himself clearly, and without trying to explain it, that chaste, healthy, firm, direct, hard, candid nature charmed him. He admired, by instinct, his opposite. His soft, wavering, disjointed, diseased, deformed ideas, attached themselves to Enjolras as to a backbone. His moral spine leaned upon that firmness. Grantaire, by the side of Enjolras, became somebody again. He was himself, moreover, composed of two apparently incompatible elements. He was ironical and cordial. His indifference was loving. His mind dispensed with belief, yet his heart could not dispense with friendship. A thorough contradiction; for an affectation is a conviction. His nature was so. There are men who seem born to be the opposite, the reverse, the counterpart. They are Pollux, Patroclus, Nisus, Eudamidas, Hephæstion, Pechméja. They live only upon condition of leaning on another; their names are continuations, and are only written preceded by the conjunction *and*; their existence is not their own; it is the other side of a destiny which is not theirs. Grantaire was one of these men. He was the reverse of Enjolras.

Grantaire, a true satellite of Enjolras, lived in this circle of young people; he dwelt in it; he took pleasure only in it; he followed them everywhere. His delight was to see these forms coming and going in the fumes of the wine. He was tolerated for his good humor.

Enjolras, being a believer, disdained this sceptic, and being sober, scorned this drunkard. He granted him a little haughty pity. Grantaire was an unaccepted Pylades. Always rudely treated by Enjolras, harshly repelled, rejected, yet returning, he said of Enjolras: "What a fine statue!"

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## II.

### FUNERAL ORATION UPON BLONDEAU, BY BOSSUET.

On a certain afternoon, which had, as we shall see, some coincidence with events before related, Laigle de Meaux was leaning lazily back against the doorway of the Café Musain. He had the appearance of a caryatid in vacation; he was supporting nothing but his reverie. He was looking at the Place Saint Michel. Leaning back is a way of lying down standing which is not disliked by dreamers. Laigle de Meaux was thinking, without melancholy, of a little mishap which had befallen him the day before at the law school, and which modified his personal plans for the future—plans which were, moreover, rather indefinite.

Reverie does not hinder a cabriolet from going by, nor the dreamer from noticing the cabriolet. Laigle de Meaux, whose eyes were wandering in a sort of general stroll, perceived, through all his somnambulism, a two-wheeled vehicle turning into the square, which was moving at a

walk, as if undecided. What did this cabriolet want? why was it moving at a walk? Laigle looked at it. There was inside, beside the driver, a young man, and before the young man a large carpet-bag. The bag exhibited to the passers this name, written in big black letters upon a card sewed to the cloth: MARIUS PONTMERCY.

This name name changed Laigle's attitude. He straightened up and addressed this apostrophe to the young man in the cabriolet:

"Mousieur Marius Pontmercy?" The cabriolet, thus called upon, stopped. The young man, who also seemed to be profoundly musing raised his eyes. "Well?" said he. "You are Monsieur Marius Pontmercy?" "Certainly." "I was looking for you," said Laigle de Meux. 'How is that?' enquired Marius; for he it was, in fact; he had just left his grandfather's, and he had before him a face which he now saw for the first time. "I do not know you." "Nor I either. I do not know you," answered Laigle.

Marius thought he had met a buffoon, and that this was the beginning of a mystification in the middle of the street. He was not in a pleasant humor just at that moment. He knit his brows; Laigle de Meux, imperturbable, continued: "You were not at school yesterday." "It is possible." "It is certain." "You are a student?" inquired Marius. "Yes, Monsieur. Like you. Day before yesterday I happened to go into the school. You know, one sometimes has such notions. The professor was about to call the roll. You know that they are very ridiculous just at that time. If you miss the third call, they erase your name. Sixty francs gone."

Marius began to listen. Laigle continued: "It was Blondeau who was calling the roll. You know Blondeau; he has a very sharp and very malicious nose, and delights in smelling out the absent. He slyly commenced with the letter P. I was not listening, not being concerned in that letter. The roll went on well, no erasure, the universe was present, Blondeau was sad. I said to myself, Blondeau, my love, you won't do the slightest execution to-day. Suddenly, Blondeau calls *Marius Pontmercy*? nobody answers. Blondeau, full of hope, repeats louder: *Marius Pontmercy*? And he seizes his pen. Monsieur, I have bowels. I said to myself rapidly: Here is a brave fellow who is going to be erased. Attention. This is a real live fellow who is not punctual. He is not a good boy. He is not a book-worm, a student who studies, a white-billed pedant, strong on science, letters, theology and wisdom, one of those numskulls drawn out with four pins; a pin for each faculty. He is an honorable idler who loafs, who likes to rusticate, who cultivates the grisette, who pays his court to beauty, who is perhaps, at this very moment, with my mistress. Let us save him. Death to Blondeau! At that moment Blondeau dipped his pen, black with erasures, into the ink, cast his tawny eye over the room, and repeated for the third time: *Marius Pontmercy*! I answered: *Present*! In that way you were not erased."

"Monsieur!——" said Marius. "And I was," added Laigle de Meaux. "I do not understand you," said Marius. Laigle resumed: "Nothing more simple. I was near the chair to answer, and near the door to escape. The professor was looking at me with a certain fixedness. Suddenly, Blondeau, who must be the malignant nose of which



Boileau speaks, leaps to the letter L. L is my letter ; I am of Meaux, and my name is Lesgle." "L'Aigle !" interrupted Marius, "what a fine name." "Monsieur, the Blondeau re-echoes this fine name and cries : "Laigle !" I answer : *Present !* Then Blondeau looks at me with the gentleness of a tiger, smiles and says : If you are Pontmercy, you are Pontmercy, you are not Laigle. A phrase which is uncomplimentary to you, but which brought me only to grief. So saying, he erases me.

Marius exclaimed : "Monsieur, I am mortified——" "First of all," interrupted Laigle, "I beg leave to embalm Blondeau in a few words of feeling eulogy. I suppose him dead. There wouldn't be much to change in his thinness, his paleness, his coldness, his stiffness, and his odor. And I say : *Erudimini qui judicatis terram.* Here lies Blondeau, Blondeau the Nose, Blondeau Nasica, the ox of discipline, *bos disciplinæ*, the Molossus of his orders, the angel of the roll, who was straight, square, exact, rigid, honest, and hideous. God has erased him as he erased me."

Marius resumed : "I am very sorry——" "Young man," said Laigle of Meaux, "let this be a lesson to you. In future, be punctual." "I really must give you a thousand excuses." "Never expose yourself again to having your neighbor erased." "I am very sorry." Laigle burst out laughing : "And I, in raptures ; I was on the brink of being a lawyer. This rupture saves me. I renounce the triumphs of the bar. I shall not defend the widow, and I shall not attack the orphan. No more toga, no more probation. Here is my erasure obtained. It is to you that I owe it, Monsieur Pontmercy. I intend to pay you a solemn visit of thanks. Where do you live ?" "In this cabriolet," said Marius. "A sign of opulence," replied Laigle calmly. "I congratulate you. You have here rent of nine thousand francs a year."

Just then Courfeyrac came out of the Café. Marius smiled sadly. "I have been paying this rent for two hours, and I hope to get out of it ; but, it is the usual story, I do not know where to go." "Monsieur," said Courfeyrac, "come home with me." "I should have priority," observed Laigle, "but I have no home." "Silence, Bossuet," replied Courfeyrac. "Bossuet," said Marius, "but I thought you called yourself Laigle." "Of Meaux," answered Laigle ; "metaphorically, Bossuet." Courfeyrac got into the cabriolet. "Driver," said he, "Hotel de la Porte Saint Jacques."

And that same evening, Marius was installed in a room at the Hotel de la Porte Saint Jacques, side by side with Courfeyrac.

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### III.

#### THE ASTONISHMENTS OF MARIUS.

In a few days, Marius was the friend of Courfeyrac. Youth is the season of prompt weldings and rapid cicatrizations. Marius, in Courfeyrac's presence, breathed freely, a new thing for him. Courfeyrac asked him no questions. He did not even think of it. At that

age, the countenance tells all at once. Speech is useless. There are some young men of whom we might say their physiognomies are talkative. They look at one another, they know one another.

One morning, however, Courfeyrac abruptly put this question to him: "By the way have you any political opinions?" "What do you mean?" said Marius, almost offended at the question. "What are you?" "Bonapartist democrat." "Grey shade of quiet mouse color," said Courfeyrac.

The next day, Courfeyrac introduced Marius to the Café Musain. Then he whispered in his ear with a smile: "I must give you your admission into the revolution." And he took him into the room of the Friends of the A B C. He presented him to the other members, saying in an under-tone this simple word, which Marius did not understand: "A pupil." Marius had fallen into a mental wasps' nest. Still, although silent and serious, he was not the less winged, nor the less armed.

Marius, up to this time solitary and inclined to soliloquy and privacy by habit and by taste, was a little bewildered at this flock of young men about him. All these different progressives attacked him at once, and perplexed him. The tumultuous sweep and sway of all these minds at liberty and at work set his ideas in a whirl. Sometimes, in the confusion, they went so far from him that he had some difficulty in finding them again. He heard talk of philosophy, of literature, of art, of history, of religion, in a style he had not looked for. He caught glimpses of strange appearances; and, as he did not bring them into perspective, he was not sure that it was not a chaos that he saw. On abandoning his grandfather's opinions for his father's, he had thought himself settled; he now suspected, with anxiety, and without daring to confess it to himself, that he was not. The angle under which he saw all things was beginning to change anew. A certain oscillation shook the whole horizon of his brain. A strange internal moving-day. He almost suffered from it. It seemed that there were to these young men no "sacred things." Marius heard, upon every subject, a singular language, annoying to his still timid mind.

None of these young men uttered this word: the Emperor. Jean Prouvaire alone sometimes said Napoleon; all the rest Bonaparte. Enjolras pronounced *Buonaparte*.

Marius became confusedly astonished. *Initium sapientiæ.*

#### IV.

##### THE BACK ROOM OF THE CAFÉ MUSAIN.

Of the conversations among these young men which Marius frequented and in which he sometimes took part, one shocked him severely.

This was held in the back room of the Café Musain. Nearly all the Friends of the A B C were together that evening. The large lamp was ceremoniously lighted. They talked of one thing and another, without passion and with noise. Save Enjolras and Marius, who were silent, each one harangued a little at random. The talk of comrades does

sometimes amount to these harmless tumults. It was a play and a fracas as much as a conversation. One threw out words which another caught up. They were talking in each of the four corners.

No woman was admitted into this back room, except Louison, the dish-washer of the Café, who passed through it from time to time to go from the wash-room to the "laboratory."

Grantaire, perfectly boozy, was deafening the corner of which he had taken possession, he was talking sense and nonsense with all his might; he cried: "I am thirsty. Mortals, I have a dream: that the tun of Heidelberg has an attack of apoplexy, and that I am the dozen leeches which is to be applied to it. I would like a drink. I desire to forget life. Life is a hideous invention of some body, I don't know who. It doesn't last, and it is good for nothing. You break your neck to live. Life is a stage scene in which there is little that is practical. Happiness is an old sash painted on one side. The Ecclesiast says: all is vanity; I agree with that good man, who perhaps never existed. Zero, not wishing to go entirely naked, has clothed himself in vanity. O vanity! the patching up of every thing with big words! a kitchen is a laboratory, a dancer is a professor, a mountebank is a gymnast, a boxer is a pugilist, an apothecary is a chemist, a hod-carrier is an architect, a jockey is a sportsman, a wood-louse is a pterygobranchiate. Vanity has a right side and a wrong side; the right side is stupid, it is the negro with his beads; the wrong side is silly, it is the philosopher with his rags. I weep over one and I laugh over the other. That which is called honors and dignities, and even honor and dignity, is generally pinchbeck. Kings make a plaything of human pride. Caligula made a horse consul; Charles II. made a sirloin a knight. Now parade yourselves then between the consul Incitatus and the baronet Roastbeef. As to the intrinsic value of people, it is hardly respectable any longer. Listen to the panegyric which neighbors pass upon each other. White is ferocious upon white; should the lily speak, how it would fix out the dove! a bigot gossiping about a devotee is more venomous than the asp and the blue viper. It is a pity that I am ignorant, for I would quote you a crowd of things, but I don't know any thing. For instance, I always was bright; when I was a pupil with Gros, instead of daubing pictures, I spent my time in pilfering apples. So much for myself; as for the rest of you, you are just as good as I am. I make fun of your perfections, excellencies and good qualities. Every good quality runs into a defect; economy borders on avarice, the generous are not far from the prodigal, the brave man is close to the bully; he who says very pious says slightly sanctimonious; there are just as many vices in virtue as there are holes in the mantle of Diogenes. Which do you admire, the slain or the slayer, Caesar or Brutus? People generally are for the slayer. Hurrah for Brutus! he slew. That is virtue. All history is only a long repetition. One century plagiarizes another. The battle of Marengo copies the battle of Pydna; the Tolbach of Clovis and the Austerlitz of Napoleon are as like as two drops of blood. I make little account of victory. Nothing is so stupid as to vanquish; the real glory is to convince. But try now to prove something! you are satisfied with succeeding, what mediocrity! and with conquering, what misery! Alas! vanity and cowardice every where. Every thing

obeys success, even grammar. *Si volet usus*, says Horace. I despise, therefore, the human race. Shall we descend from the whole part? Will you have me set about admiring the peoples? what people, if you please? Greece? The Athenians, those Parisians of old times, killed Phocion, as if we should say Coligny, and fawned upon tyrants. The most considerable man in Greece for fifty years was that grammarian Philetas, who was so small and so thin that he was obliged to put lead on his shoes so as not be blown away by the wind. There was in the grand square of Corinth a statue by the sculptor Silanion, catalogued by Pliny; this statue represented Episthates. What did Episthates do? He invented the trip in wrestling. This sums up Greece and glory. Let us pass to others. Shall I admire England? Shall I admire France? France? what for? on account of Paris? I have just told you my opinion of Athens. England? for what? on account of London? I hate Carthage. And then, London, the metropolis of luxury, is the capital of misery. In the single parish of Charing Cross, there are a hundred deaths a year from starvation. Such is Albion. I add, as a completion, that I have seen an English girl dance with a crown of roses and blue spectacles. A groan, then, for England. If I do not admire John Bull, shall I admire Brother Jonathan, then? I have little taste for this brother. Take away *time is money*, and what is left of England? take away *cotton is king*, and what is left of America? Germany is the lymph; Italy is the bile. Shall we go into ecstasies over Russia? Voltaire admired her. He admired China also. I confess that Russia has her beauties, among others a strong despotism; but I am sorry for the despots. They have very delicate health. An Alexis decapitated, a Peter stabbed, a Paul strangled, another Paul trampled down by blows from the heel of a boot, divers Ivans butchered, several Nicholasses and Basils poisoned, all that indicates that the palace of the Emperors of Russia is in an alarming condition of insalubrity. All civilized nations offer to the admiration of the thinker this circumstance: war; but war, civilized war, exhausts and sums up every form of banditism, from the brigandage of the Trabucaries of the gorges of Mount Jaxa to the marauding of the Camanche Indians in the Doubtful Pass. Pshaw! will you tell me Europe is better than Asia for all that? I admit that Asia is ridiculous; but I do not quite see what right you have to laugh at the Grand Lama, you people of the Occident who have incorporated into your fashions and your elegancies all the multifarious ordnres of majesty, from Queen Isabella's dirty chemise to the chamber-chair of the Dauphin. Messieurs humans, I tell you, not a bit of it! It is at Brussels that they consume the most brandy, at Madrid the most chocolate, at Amsterdam the most gin, at London the most wine, at Constantinople the most coffee, at Paris the most absinthe; those are all the useful notions. Paris takes the palm on the whole. In Paris, the rag-pickers even are Sybarites; Diogenes would much rather have been a rag-picker in the Place Maubert than a philosopher in the Piræus. Learn this also: the wine-shops of the rag-pickers are called *bibines*; the most celebrated are the *Saucepan* and the *Slaughter-house*. Therefore, O drinking-shops, eating-shops, tavern-signs, bar-rooms, tea-parties, meat-markets, dance-houses, rag-pickers, tippling-shops, caravanserais of the caliphs, I swear to you, I am a voluptuary."

Thus Grantaire, more than drunk, spread himself out in words; Bossuet, extending his hand, endeavored to impose silence upon him, and Grantaire started again still more beautifully: "Eagle of Meaux, down with your claws. You have no effect upon me with your gesture of Hippocrates refusing the gifts of Artaxerxes. I dispense you from quieting me. Moreover, I am sad. What would you have me tell you? Man is wicked, man is deformed; the butterfly has succeeded, man has missed fire. God failed on this animal. A crowd gives you nothing but choice of ugliness. The first man you meet will be a wretch. *Femme* [woman] rhymes with *infâme* [infamous]. Yes, I have the spleen, in addition to melancholy, with nostalgia, besides hypochondria, and I sneer, and I rage, and I yawn, and I am tired, and I am knocked in the head, and I am tormented!"

"Silence, capital R!" broke in Bossuet, who was discussing a point of law aside, and who was more than half buried in a string of judicial argot, of which here is the conclusion: "—— And as for me, although I am hardly a legist, and at best an amateur attorney, I maintain this: that by the terms of the common law of Normandy, at St. Michael's, and for every year, an equivalent must be paid for the benefit of the seigneur, saving the rights of others, by each and every of them, as well proprietaries as those seized by inheritance, and this for all terms of years, leases, freeholds, contracts domainiary and domainial, of mortgagees and mortgagors ——"

Close beside Grantaire, at a table which was almost silent, a sheet of paper, an inkstand and a pen between two wineglasses, announced that a farce was being sketched out. This important business was carried on in a whisper, and the two heads at work touched each other. "We must begin by finding the names. When we have found the names, we will find a subject." "That is true. Dictate; I will write." "Monsieur Dorimon." "Wealthy?" "Of course." "His daughter Celcstine." "—— tine. What next?" "Colonel Sainval." "Sainval is old. I would say Valsin."

Beside these dramatic aspirants, another group, who also were taking advantage of the confusion to talk privately, were discussing a duel. An old man, of thirty, was advising a young one, of eighteen, and explaining to him what sort of an adversary he had to deal with. "The devil! Look out for yourself. He is a beautiful sword. His play is neat. He comes to the attack, no lost feints, a pliant wrist, sparkling play, a flash, step exact, and ripostes mathematical. Zounds! and he is left-handed, too."

In the corner opposite to Grantaire, Joly and Bahorel were playing dominoes and talking of love.

The third corner had fallen a prey to a poetical discussion. The Pagan mythology was wrestling with the Christian mythology. The subject was Olympus, for which Jean Prouvaire, by very romanticism, took sides. Jean Prouvaire was timid only in repose. Once excited, he burst forth, a sort of gaiety characterized his enthusiasm, and he was at once laughing and lyric.

"Let us not insult the gods," said he. "The gods, perhaps, have not left us. Jupiter does not strike me as dead. The gods are dreams, say you. Well, even in nature, such as it now is, we find all the grand

old pagan myths again. Such a mountain, with the profile of a citadel, like the Vignemarle, for instance, is still to me the head-dress of Cybele; it is not proved that Pan does not come at night to blow into the hollow trunks of the willows, while he stops the holes with his fingers one after another."

In the last corner, politics was the subject. They were abusing the Charter of Louis XVIII. Combeferre defended it mildly, Courfeyrac was energetically battering it to a breach. There was on the table an unlucky copy of the famous Charter. Courfeyrac caught it up and shook it, mingling with his arguments the rustling of that sheet of paper.

"First, I desire no kings; were it only from the economical point of view, I desire none; a king is a parasite. We do not have kings gratis. Listen to this: cost of kings. At the death of Francis I., the public debt of France was thirty thousand livres de rente; at the death of Louis XIV., it was two thousand six hundred millions at twenty-eight livres the mark, which was equivalent in 1760, according to Desmarest, to four thousand five hundred millions, and which is equivalent to-day to twelve thousand millions. Secondly, no offence to Combeferre, a charter granted, is a vicious expedient of civilization. To avoid the transition, to smoothe the passage, to deaden the shock, to make the nation pass insensibly from monarchy to democracy by the practice of constitutional fictions, these are all detestable arguments! No! no! never give the people a false light. Principles wither and grow pale in your constitutional cave. No half measures, no compromises, no grant from the King to the people. In all these grants, there is an Article 14. Along with the hand which gives, there is the claw which takes back, I wholly refuse your charter. A charter is a mask; the lie is beneath it. A people who accept a charter, abdicate. Right is right only when entire. No! no charter!"

It was winter; two logs were crackling in the fire-place. It was tempting; and Courfeyrac could not resist. He crushed the poor charter in his hand, and threw it into the fire. The paper blazed up. Combeferre looked philosophically upon the burning of Louis XVIII.'s master-piece. And the sarcasms, the sallies, the jests, that French thing which is called high spirits, that English thing which is called good humor, good taste and bad taste, good reasons and bad reasons, all the commingled follies of dialogue, rising at once and crossing from all points of the room, made above their heads a sort of joyous bombardment.

The jostlings of young minds against each other have this wonderful attribute, that one can never foresee the spark, nor predict the flash. What may spring up in a moment? No body knows. A burst of laughter follows a scene of tenderness. In a moment of buffoonery, the serious makes its entrance. Impulses depend upon a chance word. The spirit of each is sovereign. A jest suffices to open the door to the unlooked for. Theirs are conferences with sharp turns, where the perspective suddenly changes. Chance is the director of these conversations.

A stern thought, oddly brought out of a clatter of words, suddenly

crossed the tumult of speech in which Grantaire, Bahorel, Prouvaire, Bossuet, Combeferre and Courfeyrac were confusedly fencing. How does a phrase make its way into a dialogue? whence comes it that it makes its mark all at once upon the attention of those who hear it? We have just said, nobody knows. In the midst of the uproar, Bossuet suddenly ended some apostrophe to Combeferre with this date: "The 18th of June, 1815: Waterloo."

At this name, Waterloo, Marius, who was leaning on a table with a glass of water by him, took his hand away from under his chin, and began to look earnestly about the room.

"Pardieu," exclaimed Courfeyrac (*Parbleu*, at that period, was falling into disuse), "that number 18 is strange, and striking to me. It is the fatal number of Bonaparte. Put Louis before and Brumaire behind, you have the whole destiny of the man, with this expressive peculiarity, that the beginning is hard pressed by the end."

Enjolras, till now dumb, broke the silence, and thus addressed Courfeyrac: "You mean the crime by the expiation."

This word, *crime*, exceeded the limits of the endurance of Marius, already much excited by the abrupt evocation of Waterloo.

He rose, he walked slowly towards the map of France spread out upon the wall, at the bottom of which could be seen an island in a separate compartment; he laid his finger upon this compartment and said: "Corsica. A little island which has made France truly great."

This was a breath of freezing air. All was silent. They felt that now something was to be said.

Bahorel, replying to Bousset, was just assuming a pet attitude. He gave it up to listen.

Enjolras, whose blue eye was not fixed upon any body, and seemed staring into space, answered without looking at Marius: "France needs no Corsica to be great. France is great because she is France. *Quia nominor leo*."

Marius felt no desire to retreat; he turned towards Enjolras, and his voice rang with a vibration which came from the quivering of his nerves: "God forbid that I should lessen France! but it is not lessening her to join her with Napoleon. Come, let us talk then. I am a new comer among you, but I confess that you astound me. Where are we? who are we? who are you? who am I? Let us explain ourselves about the Emperor. I hear you say Buonaparte, accenting the *u* like the royalists. I can tell you that my grandfather does better yet; he says Buonaparté. I thought you were young men. Where is your enthusiasm then? and what do you do with it? whom do you admire, if you do not admire the Emperor? and what more must you have? If you do not like that great man, what great men would you have? He was everything. He was complete. He had in his brain the cube of human faculties. He made codes like Justinian, he dictated like Cæsar, his conversation joined the lightning of Pascal to the thunderbolt of Tacitus, he made history and he wrote it, his bulletins are Iliads, he combined the figures of Newton with the metaphors of Mahomet, he left behind him in the Orient words as grand as the pyramids, at Tilsit he taught majesty to Emperors, at the Academy of Sciences he replied to

Laplace, in the Council of State he held his ground with Merlin, he gave a soul to the geometry of those and to the trickery of these, he was legal with the attorneys and sidereal with the astronomers; like Cromwell blowing out one candle when two were lighted, he went to the Temple to cheapen a curtain tassel; he saw everything; he knew everything; which did not prevent him from laughing a goodman's laugh by the cradle of his little child; and all at once, startled Europe listened, armies set themselves in march, parks of artillery rolled along, bridges of boats stretched over the rivers, clouds of cavalry galloped in the hurricane, eries, trumpets, a trembling of thrones everywhere, the frontiers of the kingdoms oscillated upon the map, the sound of a superhuman blade was heard leaping from its sheath, men saw him, standing erect in the horizon with a flame in his hands and a resplendence in his eyes, unfolding in the thunder his two wings, the Grand Army and the Old Guard, and he was the archangel of war!"

All were silent, and Enjolras bowed his head. Silence always has something of the effect of an acquiescence or of a sort of pushing to the wall. Marius, almost without taking breath, continued with a burst of enthusiasm:

"Be just, my friends! to be the empire of such an emperor, what a splendid destiny for a people, when that people is France, and when it adds its genius to the genius of such a man! To appear and to reign, to march and to triumph, to have every capital for a magazine, to take his grenadiers and make kings of them, to decree the downfall of dynasties, to transfigure Europe at a double quickstep, so that men feel, when you threaten, that you lay your hand on the hilt of the sword of God, to follow, in a single man, Hannibal, Cæsar, and Charlemagne, to be the people of one who mingles with your every dawn the glorious announcement of a battle gained, to be wakened in the morning by the cannon of the Invalides, to hurl into the vault of day mighty words which blaze forever, Marengo, Areola, Austerlitz, Jena, Wagram! to call forth at every moment constellations of victories in the zenith of the centuries, to make the French Empire the successor of the Roman Empire, to be the Grand Nation and to bring forth the Grand Army, to send your legions flying over the whole earth as a mountain sends its eagles upon all sides, to vanquish, to rule, to thunderstrike, to be in Europe a kind of gilded people through much glory, to sound through history a Titan trumpet call, to conquer the world twice, by conquest and by resplendence, this is sublime, and what can be more grand?"

"To be free," said Combeferre.

Marius in his turn bowed his head; these cold and simple words had pierced his epic effusion like a blade of steel, and he felt it vanish within him. When he raised his eyes, Combeferre was there no longer. Satisfied, probably, with his reply to the apotheosis, he had gone out, and all, except Enjolras, had followed him. The room was empty. Enjolras, remaining alone with Marius, was looking at him seriously. Marius, meanwhile, having rallied his ideas a little, did not consider himself beaten; there was still something left of the ebullition within him, which doubtless was about to find expression in syllogisms arrayed against Enjolras, when suddenly they heard somebody singing as he was going down stairs. It was Combeferre, and what he was singing is this:



Si César m'avait donné  
 La gloire et la guerre,  
 Et qu'il me fallût quitter  
 L'amour de ma mère,  
 Je dirais au grand César :  
 Reprends ton sceptre et ton char,  
 J'aime mieux ma mère, ô gué !  
 J'aime mieux ma mère.\*

The wild and tender accent with which Combeferre sang, gave to this stanza a strange grandeur. Marius, thoughtful, and with his eyes directed to the ceiling, repeated almost mechanically : "my mother—" At this moment he felt Enjolras' hand on his shoulder. "Citizen," said Enjolras to him, "my mother is the Republic."

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V

RES ANGUSTA.

That evening left Marius in a profound agitation, with a sorrowful darkness in his soul. He was experiencing what perhaps the earth experiences at the moment when it is furrowed with the share that the grains of wheat may be sown ; it feels the wound alone ; the thrill of the germ and the joy of the fruit do not come until later.

Marius was gloomy. He had but just attained a faith ; could he so soon reject it ? He decided within himself that he could not. He declared to himself that he would not doubt, and he began to doubt in spite of himself. To be between two religions, one which you have not yet abandoned, and another which you have not yet adopted, is insupportable ; and twilight is pleasant only to bat-like souls. Marius was an open eye, and he needed the true light. To him the dusk of doubt was harmful. Whatever might be his desire to stop where he was, and to hold fast there, he was irresistibly compelled to continue, to advance, to examine, to think, to go forward. Where was that going to lead him ? he feared, after having taken so many steps which had brought him nearer to his father, to take now any steps which should separate them. His dejection increased with every reflection which occurred to him. Steep cliffs rose about him. He was on good terms neither with his grandfather nor with his friends ; rash towards the former, backward towards the others ; and he felt doubly isolated, from old age, and also from youth. He went no more to the Café Musain.

In this trouble in which his mind was plunged, he scarcely gave a thought to certain serious phases of existence. The realities of life do not allow themselves to be forgotten. They came and jogged his

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\*If Cæsar had given me  
 Glory and war,  
 And if I must abandon  
 The love of my mother,  
 I would say to great Cæsar :  
 Take thy sceptre and car,  
 I prefer my mother, ah me !  
 I prefer my mother.

memory sharply. One morning, the keeper of the house entered Marius' room, and said to him: "Monsieur Courfeyrac is responsible for you." "Yes." "But I am in need of money." "Ask Courfeyrac to come and speak with me," said Marius. Courfeyrac came; the host left them. Marius related to him what he had not thought of telling him before, that he was, so to speak, alone in the world, without any relatives.

"What are you going to become?" said Courfeyrac. "I have no idea," answered Marius. "What are you going to do?" "I have no idea." "Have you any money?" "Fifteen francs." "Do you wish me to lend you some?" "Never." "Have you any clothes?" "What you see." "Have you any jewelry?" "A watch." "A silver one?" "Gold, here it is." "I know a dealer in clothing who will take your overcoat and one pair of trowsers." "That is good." "You will then have but one pair of trowsers, one waistcoat, one hat, and one coat." "And my boots." "What? you will not go bare-foot? what opulence!" "That will be enough." "I know a watchmaker who will buy your watch." "That is good." "No, it is not good. What will you do afterwards?" "What I must. Anything honorable at least." "Do you know English?" "No." "Do you know German?" "No." "That is bad." "Why?" "Because a friend of mine, a bookseller, is making a sort of encyclopædia, for which you could have translated German or English articles. It is poor pay, but it gives a living." "I will learn English and German." "And in the meantime?" "In the meantime I will eat my coats and my watch."

The clothes dealer was sent for. He gave twenty francs for the clothes. They went to the watchmaker. He gave forty-five francs for the watch. "That is not bad," said Marius to Courfeyrac, on returning to the house; "with my fifteen francs, this makes eighty francs." "The hotel bill?" observed Courfeyrac. "Ah! I forgot," said Marius. The host presented his bill, which must be paid on the spot. It amounted to seventy francs. "I have ten francs left," said Marius. "The devil," said Courfeyrac, "you will have five francs to eat while you are learning English, and five francs while you are learning German. That will be swallowing a language very rapidly, or a hundred sous piece very slowly."

Meanwhile, Aunt Gillenormand, who was really a kind person on sad occasions, had finally unearthed Marius' lodgings. One morning when Marius came home from the school, he found a letter from his aunt, and the *sixty pistoles*, that is to say, six hundred francs in gold, in a sealed box.

Marius sent the thirty louis back to his aunt, with a respectful letter, in which he told her that he had the means of living, and that he could provide henceforth for all his necessities. At that time he had three francs left. The aunt did not inform the grandfather of this refusal, lest she should exasperate him. Indeed, had he not said: "Let nobody ever speak to me of this blood-drinker?" Marius left the Porte Saint Jacques Hotel, unwilling to contract debt.

## Book Fifth.

## THE EXCELLENCE OF MISFORTUNE.

## I.

## MARIUS NEEDY.

Life became stern to Marius. To eat his coats and his watch was nothing. He chewed that inexpressible thing which is called *the cud of bitterness*. A horrible thing, which includes days without bread, nights without sleep, evenings without a candle, a hearth without a fire, weeks without labor, a future without hope, a coat out at the elbows, an old hat which makes young girls laugh, the door found shut against you at night because you have not paid your rent, the insolence of the porter and the landlord, the jibes of neighbors, humiliations, self-respect outraged, any drudgery acceptable, disgust, bitterness, prostration—Marius learned how one swallows down all these things, and how they are often the only things that one has to swallow. At this period of existence, when man has need of pride, because he has need of love, he felt that he was mocked at because he was badly dressed, and ridiculed because he was poor. At the age when youth swells the heart with an imperial pride, he more than once dropped his eyes upon his worn-out boots, and experienced the undeserved shame and the poignant blushes of misery. Wonderful and terrible trial, from which the feeble come out infamous, from which the strong come out sublime. Crucible into which destiny casts a man whenever she desires a scoundrel or a demigod.

For there are many great deeds done in the small struggles of life. There is a determined though unseen bravery, which defends itself foot to foot in the darkness against the fatal invasions of necessity and of baseness. Noble and mysterious triumphs which no eye sees, which no renown rewards, which no flourish of trumpets salutes. Life, misfortune, isolation, abandonment, poverty, are battle-fields which have their heroes; obscure heroes, sometimes greater than the illustrious heroes.

Strong and rare natures are thus created; misery, almost always a step-mother, is sometimes a mother; privation gives birth to power of soul and mind; distress is the nurse of self-respect; misfortune is a good breast for great souls.

There was a period in Marius's life when he swept his own hall, when he bought a pennyworth of Brie cheese at the market-woman's, when he waited for nightfall to make his way to the baker's and buy a loaf of bread, which he carried furtively to his garret, as if he had stolen it. Sometimes there was seen to glide into the corner meat-shop, in the midst of the jeering cooks who elbowed him, an awkward young man, with books under his arm, who had a timid and frightened appearance, and who, as he entered, took off his hat from his forehead, which was

dripping with sweat, made a low bow to the astonished butcher, another bow to the butcher's boy, asked for a mutton cutlet, paid six or seven sous for it, wrapped it up in paper, put it under his arm between two books, and went away. It was Marius. On this cutlet, which he cooked himself, he lived three days.

The first day he ate the meat; the second day he ate the fat; the third day he gnawed the bone. On several occasions, Aunt Gillenormand made overtures, and sent him the sixty pistoles. Marius always sent them back, saying that he had no need of anything.

He was still in mourning for his father, when the revolution which we have described was accomplished in his ideas. Since then, he had never left off black clothes. His clothes left him, however. A day came, at last, when he had no coat. His trowsers were going also. What was to be done? Courfeyrac, for whom he also had done some good turns, gave him an old coat. For thirty sous Marius had it turned by some porter or other, and it was a new coat. But this coat was green. Then Marius did not go out till after nightfall. That made his coat black. Desiring always to be in mourning, he clothed himself with night.

Through all this he procured admission to the bar. He was reputed to occupy Courfeyrac's room, which was decent, and where a certain number of law books, supported and filled out by some odd volumes of novels, made up the library required by the rules.

When Marius had become a lawyer, he informed his grandfather of it, in a letter which was frigid, but full of submission and respect. M. Gillenormand took the letter with trembling hands, read it, and threw it, torn into pieces, into the basket. Two or three days afterwards, Made-moiselle Gillenormand overheard her father, who was alone in his room, talking aloud. This was always the case when he was much excited. She listened: the old man said: "If you were not a fool, you would know that a man cannot be a baron and a lawyer at the same time."

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### III.

#### MARIUS POOR.

It is with misery as with everything else. It gradually becomes endurable. It ends by taking form and becoming fixed. You vegetate, that is to say you develop in some wretched fashion, but sufficient for existence. This is the way in which Marius Pontmercy's life was arranged.

He had got out of the narrowest place; the pass widened a little before him. By dint of hard work, courage, perseverance, and will, he had succeeded in earning by his labor about seven hundred francs a year. He had learned German and English; thanks to Courfeyrac, who introduced him to his friend the publisher, Marius filled, in the literary department of the book-house, the useful rôle of *utility*. He made out prospectuses, translated from the journals, annotated republications, compiled biographies, etc., net result, year in and year out, seven hun-

dred francs. He lived on this. How? Not badly. We are going to tell.

Marius occupied, at an annual rent of thirty francs, a wretched little room in the Gorbeau tenement, with no fire-place, called a cabinet, in which there was no more furniture than was indispensable. The furniture was his own. He gave three francs a month to the old woman who had charge of the building, for sweeping his room and bringing him every morning a little warm water, a fresh egg, and a penny loaf bread. On this loaf and this egg he breakfasted. His breakfast varied from two to four sous, as eggs were cheap or dear. At six o'clock in the evening he went down into the Rue Saint Jacques, to dine at Rousseau, opposite Basset's, the print dealer's, at the corner of the Rue des Mathurins. He ate no soup. He took a sixpenny plate of meat, a threepenny half-plate of vegetables, and a threepenny desert. For three sous, as much bread as he liked. As for wine he drank water. On paying at the counter, where Madame Rousseau was seated majestically, still plump and fresh also in those days, he gave a sou to the waiter, and Madame Rousseau gave him a smile. Then he went away. For sixteen sous, he had a smile and a dinner.

This Rousseau restaurant, where so few bottles and so many pitchers were emptied, was rather an appeasant than a restorant. It is not kept now. The master had a fine title; he was called Rousseau the Aquatic.

Thus, breakfast four sous, dinner sixteen sous, his food cost him twenty sous a day, which was three hundred and sixty-five francs a year. Add the thirty francs for his lodging, and the thirty six francs to the old woman, and a few other trifling expenses, and for four hundred and fifty francs, Marius was fed, lodged and waited upon. His clothes cost him a hundred francs, his linen fifty francs, his washing fifty francs; the whole did not exceed six hundred and fifty francs. This left him fifty francs. He was rich. He occasionally lent ten francs to a friend; Courfeyrac borrowed sixty francs of him once. As for fire, having no fireplace, Marius had "simplified" it.

Marius always had two complete suits, one old "for every day," the other quite new, for special occasions. Both were black. He had but three shirts, one he had on, another in the drawer, the third at the washer-woman's. He renewed them as they wore out. They were usually ragged, so he buttoned his coat to his chin.

For Marius to arrive at this flourishing condition, had required years. Hard years, and difficult ones; those to get through, these to climb. Marius had never given up for a single day. He had undergone everything, in the shape of privation; he had done everything except get into debt. He gave himself this credit, that he had never owed a sou to anybody. For him a debt was the beginning of slavery. He felt even that a creditor is worse than a master; for a master owns only your person, a creditor owns your dignity and can belabor that. Rather than borrow, he did not eat. He had had many days of fasting. Feeling that all extremes meet, and that if we do not take care, abasement of fortune may lead to baseness of soul, he watched jealously over his pride. Such a habit or such a carriage as, in any other condition, would have appeared

deferential, seemed humiliating, and he braced himself against it. He risked nothing, not wishing to take a backward step. He had a kind of stern blush upon his face. He was timid even to rudeness.

In all his trials he felt encouraged and sometimes even upborne by a secret force within. The soul helps the body, and at certain moments uplifts it. It is the only bird which sustains its cage.

By the side of his father's name, another name was engraven upon Marius' heart, the name of Thénardier. Marius, in his enthusiastic yet serious nature, surrounded with a sort of halo the man to whom, as he thought, he owed his father's life, that brave sergeant who had saved the Colonel in the midst of the balls and bullets of Waterloo. He never separated the memory of this man from the memory of his father, and he associated them in his veneration. It was a sort of worship with two steps, the high altar for the Colonel, the low one for Thénardier. The idea of the misfortune into which he knew that Thénardier had fallen and been engulfed, intensified his feeling of gratitude. Marius had learned at Montfermeil of the ruin and bankruptcy of the unlucky innkeeper. Since then he had made untold efforts to get track of him, and to endeavor to find him, in that dark abyss of misery in which Thénardier had disappeared. Marius had beaten the whole country; he had been to Chelles, to Bondy, to Gournay, to Nogent, to Lagny. For three years he had been devoted to this, spending in these explorations what little money he could spare. Nobody could give him any news of Thénardier; it was thought he had gone abroad. His creditors had sought for him, also, with less love than Marius, but with as much zeal, and had not been able to put their hands on him. Marius blamed and almost hated himself for not succeeding in his researches. This was the only debt which the Colonel had left him; and Marius made it a point of honor to pay it. "What," thought he, "when my father lay dying on the field of battle, Thénardier could find him through the smoke and the grape, and bring him off on his shoulders, and yet he owed him nothing; while I, who owe so much to Thénardier, I cannot reach him in that darkness in which he is suffering, and restore him, in my turn from death to life. Oh! I will find him!" Indeed to find Thénardier, Marius would have given one of his arms, and to save him from his wretchedness, all his blood. To see Thénardier, to say to him—"You do not know me, but I do know you. Here I am, dispose of me!" This was the sweetest and most magnificent dream of Marius.

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### III.

#### MARIUS A MAN.

Marius was now twenty years old. It was three years since he had left his grandfather. They remained on the same terms on both sides, without attempting a reconciliation, and without seeking to meet. And, indeed, what was the use of meeting? to come in conflict? Which would have had the best of it? Marius was a vase of brass, but M. Gillenormand was an iron pot.

To tell the truth, Marius was mistaken as to his grandfather's heart. He imagined that M. Gillenormand had never loved him, and that this crusty and harsh yet smiling old man, who swore, screamed, stormed, and lifted his cane, felt for him at most only the affection, at once slight and severe, of the old men of comedy. Marius was deceived. There are fathers who do not love their children; there is no grandfather who does not adore his grandson. In reality, we have said, M. Gillenormand worshipped Marius. He worshipped him in his own way, with an accompaniment of cuffs, and even of blows; but, when the child was gone, he felt a dark void in his heart; he ordered that nobody should speak of him again, and regretted that he was so well obeyed. At first he hoped that this Buonapartist, this Jacobin, this terrorist, this Septemberist, would return. But weeks passed away, months passed away, years passed away; to the great despair of M. Gillenormand, the blood-drinker did not re-appear! "But I could not do anything else than turn him away," said the grandfather, and he asked himself: "If it were to be done again, would I do it?" His pride promptly answered, Yes, but his old head, which he shook in silence, sadly answered, No. He had his hours of dejection. He missed Marius. Old men need affection as they do sunshine. It is warmth. However strong his nature might be, the absence of Marius had changed something in him. For nothing in the world would he have taken a step towards the "little rogue;" but he suffered. He never inquired after him, but he thought of him constantly. He lived, more and more retired, in the Marais. He was still, as formerly, gay and violent, but his gaiety had a convulsive harshness as if it contained grief and anger, and his bursts of violence always terminated by a sort of placid and gloomy exhaustion. He said sometimes: "Oh! if he would come back, what a good box of the ear I would give him."

As for the aunt, she thought too little to love very much; Marius was now nothing to her but a sort of Jim, dark outline; and she finally busied herself a good deal less about him than with the cat or the parrot which she probably had. What increased the secret suffering of grandfather Gillenormand, was that he shut her entirely out, and let her suspect nothing of it. His chagrin was like those newly invented furnaces which consume their own smoke. Sometimes it happened that some blundering, officious body would speak to him of Marius, and ask: "What is your grandson doing, or what has become of him?" The old bourgeois would answer, with a sigh, if he was too sad, or giving his ruffle a tap, if he wished to seem gay: "Monsieur the Baron Pontmercy is pettifogging in some hole."

While the old man was regretting, Marius was rejoicing. As with all good hearts, suffering had taken away his bitterness. He thought of M. Gillenormand only with kindness, but he had determined to receive nothing more from the man *who had been cruel to his father*. This was now the softened translation of his first indignation. Moreover, he was happy in having suffered, and in suffering still. It was for his father. His hard life satisfied him, and pleased him. He said to himself with a sort of pleasure that—*it was the very least*; that it was—an expiation; that—save for this, he would have been punished otherwise and later, for his unnatural indifference towards his father, and towards such a

father; that it would not have been just that his father should have had all the suffering, and himself none;—what were his efforts and his privation, moreover, compared with the heroic life of the colonel? that finally his only way of drawing near his father, and becoming like him, was to be valiant against indigence as he had been brave against the enemy; and that this was doubtless what the colonel meant by the words: "*He will be worthy of it.*" Words which Marius continued to bear, not upon his breast, the colonel's paper having disappeared, but in his heart.

And then, when his grandfather drove him away, he was but a child; now he was a man. He felt it. Misery, we must insist, had been good to him. Poverty in youth, when it succeeds, is so far magnificent that it turns the whole will towards effort, and the whole soul towards aspiration. Poverty strips the material life entirely bare, and makes it hideous; thence arise inexpressible yearnings towards the ideal life. The rich young man has a hundred brilliant and coarse amusements, racing, hunting, dogs, cigars, gaming, feasting, and the rest; busying the lower portions of the soul at the expense of its higher and delicate portions. The poor young man must work for his bread; he eats; when he has eaten, he has nothing more but reverie. He goes free to the play which God gives; he beholds the sky, space, the stars, the flowers, the children, the humanity in which he suffers, the creation in which he shines. He looks at humanity so much that he sees the soul, he looks at creation so much that he sees God. He dreams, he feels that he is great; he dreams again, and he feels that he is tender. From the egotism of the suffering man, he passes to the compassion of the contemplating man. A wonderful feeling springs up within him, forgetfulness of self, and pity for all. In thinking of the numberless enjoyments which nature offers, gives, and gives lavishly to open souls, and refuses to closed souls, he, a millionaire of intelligence, comes to grieve for the millionaires of money. All hatred goes out of his heart in proportion as all light enters his mind. And then is he unhappy? No. The misery of a young man is never miserable. The first lad you meet, poor as he may be, with his health, his strength, his quick step, his shining eyes, his blood which circulates warmly, his black locks, his fresh cheeks, his rosy lips, his white teeth, his pure breath, will always be envied by an old emperor. And then every morning he sets about earning his bread; and while his hands are earning his living, his back-bone is gaining firmness, his brain is gaining ideas. When his work is done, he returns to ineffable ecstasies, to contemplation, to joy; he sees his feet in difficulties, in obstacles, on the pavement, in thorns, sometimes in the mire; his head is in the light. He is firm, serene, gentle, peaceful, attentive, serious, content with little, benevolent; and he blesses God for having given him these two estates which many of the rich are without; labor which makes him free, and thought which makes him noble.

This is what had taken place in Marius. He had even, to tell the truth, gone a little too far on the side of contemplation. The day on which he had arrived at the point of being almost sure of earning his living, he stopped there, preferring to be poor, and retrenching from labor to give to thought. That is to say, he passed sometimes whole



days in thinking, plunged and swallowed up like a visionary, in the mute ecstasy and interior radiance. He had put the problem of his life thus: to work as little as possible at material labor, that he might work as much as possible at impalpable labor; in other words, to give a few hours to real life, and to cast the rest into the infinite. He did not perceive, thinking that he lacked nothing, that contemplation thus obtained comes to be one of the forms of sloth, that he was content with subduing the primary necessities of life, and that he was resting too soon.

It was clear that, for his energetic and generous nature, this could only be a transitory state, and that at the first shock against the inevitable complications of destiny, Marius would arouse.

Meantime, although he was a lawyer, and whatever Grandfather Gille-normand might think, he was not pleading, he was not even pettifogging. Reverie had turned him away from the law. To consort with attorneys, to attend courts, to hunt up cases, was wearisome. Why should he do it? He saw no reason for changing his business. This cheap and obscure book-making had procured him sure work, work with little labor, which, as we have explained, was sufficient for him.

One of the booksellers for whom he worked, M. Magimel, I think, had offered to take him home, give him a good room, furnish him regular work, and pay him fifteen hundred francs a year. To have a good room! fifteen hundred francs? Very well. But to give up his liberty! to work for a salary, to be a kind of literary clerk! In Marius' opinion, to accept, would make his position better and worse at the same time; he would gain in comfort and lose in dignity; it was a complete and beautiful misfortune given up for an ugly and ridiculous constraint; something like a blind man who should gain one eye. He refused.

Marius' life was solitary. From his taste for remaining outside of everything, and also from having been startled by its excesses, he had decided not to enter the group presided over by Enjolras. They had remained good friends; they were ready to help one another, if need were, in all possible ways; but nothing more. Marius had two friends, one young, Courfeyrac, and one old, M. Mabeuf. He inclined towards the old one. First he was indebted to him for the revolution through which he had gone; he was indebted to him for having known and loved his father. "*He operated upon me for the cataract,*" said he. Certainly, this churchwarden had been decisive. M. Mabeuf was not, however, on that occasion anything more than the calm and passive agent of Providence. He had enlightened Marius accidentally and without knowing it, as a candle does which somebody carries; he had been the candle and not the somebody.

As to the interior political revolution in Marius, M. Mabeuf was entirely incapable of comprehending it, desiring it, or directing it.

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#### IV

#### POVERTY A GOOD NEIGHBOR OF MISERY.

Marius had a liking for this open-hearted old man, who saw that he was being slowly seized by indigence, and who had come gradually to

be astonished at it, without, however, as yet becoming sad. Marius met Courfeyraë, and went to see Monsieur Mabeuf. Very rarely, however; once or twice a month, at most.

It was Marius' delight to take long walks alone on the outer Boulevards, or in the Champ de Mars, or in the less frequented walks of the Luxembourg. He sometimes spent half a day in looking at a vegetable garden, at the beds of salad, the fowls on the dung-heap, and the horse turning the wheel of the pump. The passers-by looked at him with surprise, and some thought that he had a suspicious appearance and an ill-omened manner. He was only a poor young man, dreaming without an object.

It was in one of these walks that he had discovered the Gorbéau ténement, and its isolation and cheapness being an attraction to him, he had taken a room in it. He was only known in it by the name of Monsieur Marius.

Some of the old generals or of the old companions of his father had invited him, when they had made his acquaintance, to come and see them. Marius did not refuse. These were opportunities to talk about his father. He went thus from time to time to Count Pajol's, to Gen'l Bellavesne's, to General Fririon's, to the Invalides. They had music and dancing. On such evenings, Marius wore his new coat. But he never went to these soirées or balls except when the ground was frozen like a rock, for he could not afford a carriage, and he did not like to go unless his boots shone like mirrors. He sometimes said, but without bitterness: "Mankind is so constituted that, in a parlor, your whole dress may be soiled except your shoes. In order to be well received, but one irreproachable thing is requisite;—conscience? no, boots."

All passions, except those of the heart, are dissipated by reverie. Marius' political fevers were over. The Revolution of 1830, by satisfying him, and soothing him, had aided in this. He remained the same, with the exception of his passionateness. He had still the same opinions. But they were softened. Properly speaking, he held opinions no longer; he had sympathies. Of what party was he? of the party of humanity. Out of humanity he chose France; out of the nation he chose the people; out of the people he chose woman. To her, above all, his pity went out. He now preferred an idea to a fact, a poet to a hero, and he admired a book like Job still more than an event like Marengo. And then when, after a day of meditation, he returned at night along the boulevards, and saw through the branches of the trees the fathomless space, the darkness, the mystery, all that which is only human seemed to him very petty.

He thought he had, and he had perhaps in fact, arrived at the truth of life and of human philosophy, and he had finally come hardly to look at anything but the sky, the only thing that truth can see from the bottom of her well. This did not hinder him from multiplying plans, combinations, scaffoldings, projects for the future. In this condition of reverie, an eye which could have looked into Marius' soul would have been dazzled by its purity. In fact, were it given to our eye of flesh to see into the consciences of others, we should judge a man much more surely from what he dreams than from what he thinks. There is will in the thought, there is none in the dream. The dream, which is com-

pletely spontaneous, takes and keeps, even in the gigantic and the ideal, the form of our mind. Nothing springs more directly and more sincerely from the bottom of our souls than our unreflected and indefinite aspirations towards the splendors of destiny. In these aspirations, much more than in ideas which are combined, studied, and compared, we can find the true character of each man. Our chimæras are what most resemble ourselves. Each one dreams the unknown and the impossible according to his own nature.

Towards the middle of this year 1831, the old woman who waited upon Marius told him that his neighbors, the wretched Jondrette family, were to be turned into the street. Marius, who passed almost all his days out of doors, hardly knew that he had any neighbors. "Why are they turned out?" said he. "Because they do not pay their rent; they owe for two quarters." "How much is that?" "Twenty francs," said the old woman. Marius had thirty francs in reserve in a drawer. "Here," said he, to the old woman, "there are twenty-five francs. Pay for these poor people, give them five francs, and do not tell them that it is from me."

## Book Sixth.

### THE CONJUNCTION OF TWO STARS.

#### I.

##### THE NICKNAME: MODE OF FORMATION OF FAMILY NAMES.

Marius was now a fine-looking young man, of medium height, with heavy jet-black hair, a high intelligent brow, large and passionate nostrils, a frank and calm expression, and an indescribable something beaming from every feature, which was at once lofty, thoughtful and innocent. His profile, all the lines of which were rounded, but without loss of strength, possessed that Germanic gentleness which has made its way into French physiognomy through Alsace and Lorraine, and that entire absence of angles which rendered the Sicambri so recognisable among the Romans, and which distinguishes the leonine from the aquiline race. He was at that season of life at which the mind of men who think, is made up in nearly equal proportions of depth and simplicity. In a difficult situation he possessed all the essentials of stupidity; another turn of the screw, and he could become sublime. His manners were reserved, cold, polished, far from free. But as his mouth was very pleasant, his lips the reddest and his teeth the whitest in the world, his smile corrected the severity of his physiognomy. At certain moments there was a strange contrast between this chaste brow and this voluptuous smile. His eye was small, his look great.

At the time of his most wretched poverty, he noticed that girls turned when he passed, and with a deathly feeling in his heart he fled or hid himself. He thought they looked at him on account of his old clothes,

and that they were laughing at him; the truth is, that they looked at him because of his graceful appearance, and that they dreamed over it.

This wordless misunderstanding between him and the pretty girls he met, had rendered him hostile to society. He attached himself to none, for the excellent reason that he fled before all. Thus he lived without aim—like a beast, said Courfeyrac.

There were, however, in all the immensity of creation, two women from whom Marius never fled, and whom he did not at all avoid. Indeed he would have been very much astonished had anybody told him that they were women. One was the old woman with the beard, who swept his room, and who gave Courfeyrac an opportunity to say: "As his servant wears her beard, Marius does not wear his." The other was a little girl that he saw very often, and that he never looked at.

For more than a year Marius had noticed in a retired walk of the Luxembourg, the walk which borders the parapet of the Pépinière, a man and a girl quite young, nearly always sitting side by side, on the same seat, at the most retired end of the walk, near the Rue de l'Ouest. Whenever that chance which controls the promenades of men whose eye is turned within, led Marius to this walk, and it was almost every day, he found this couple there. The man might be sixty years old; he seemed sad and serious; his whole person presented the robust but wearied appearance of a soldier retired from active service. Had he worn a decoration, Marius would have said: it is an old officer. His expression was kind, but it did not invite approach, and he never returned a look. He wore a blue coat and pantaloons, and a broad-brimmed hat, which always appeared to be new; a black cravat, and Quaker linen, that is to say, brilliantly white, but of coarse texture. A grisette passing near him one day, said: There is a very nice widower. His hair was perfectly white.

The first time the young girl that accompanied him sat down on the seat which they seemed to have adopted, she looked like a girl of about thirteen or fourteen, puny to the extent of being almost ugly, awkward, insignificant, yet promising, perhaps, to have rather fine eyes. But they were always looking about with a disagreeable assurance. She wore the dress, at once aged and childish, peculiar to the convent school-girl, an ill-fitting garment of coarse black merino. They appeared to be father and daughter.

For two or three days Marius scrutinized this old man, who was not yet an aged man, and this little girl, not yet a woman; then he paid no more attention to them. For their part they did not even seem to see him. They talked with each other peacefully, and with indifference to all else. The girl chatted incessantly and gaily. The old man spoke little, and at times looked upon her with an unutterable expression of fatherliness.

Marius had acquired a sort of mechanical habit of promenading on this walk. He always found them there. It was usually thus: Marius would generally reach the walk at the end opposite their seat, promenade the whole length of it, passing before them, then return to the end by which he entered, and so on. He performed this turn five or six times in his promenade, and this promenade five or six times a week, but they and he had never come to exchange bows. This man and this young

girl, though they appeared, and perhaps because they appeared to avoid observation, had naturally excited the attention of the five or six students, who, from time to time, took their promenades along the Pépinière; the studious after their lecture, the others after their game of billiards. Courfeyrac, who belonged to the latter, had noticed them at some time or other, but finding the girl homely, had very quickly and carefully avoided them. He had fled like a Parthian, launching a nickname behind him. Struck especially by the dress of the little girl and the hair of the old man, he had named the daughter *Mademoiselle Lanoire* [*Black*,] and the father *Monsieur Leblanc* [*White*]; and so, as nobody knew them otherwise, in the absence of a name, this surname had become fixed. The students said: "Ah! Monsieur Leblanc is at his seat!" and Marius, like the rest, had found it convenient to call this unknown gentleman M. Leblanc.

We shall do as they did, and say M. Leblanc for the convenience of this story.

Marius saw them thus nearly every day at the same hour during the first year. He found the man very much to his liking, but the girl rather disagreeable.

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## II.

### LUX FACTA EST.

The second year, at the precise point of this history to which the reader has arrived, it so happened that Marius broke off this habit of going to the Luxembourg, without really knowing why himself, and there were nearly six months during which he did not set foot there in his walk. At last he went back there again one day; it was a serene summer morning, Marius was as happy as one always is when the weather is fine. It seemed to him as if he had in his heart all the bird songs which he heard, and all the bits of blue sky which he saw through the trees.

He went straight to "his walk," and as soon as he reached it, he saw, still on the same seat, this well known pair. When he came near them, however, he saw that it was indeed the same man, but it seemed to him that it was no longer the same girl. The woman whom he now saw, was a noble, beautiful creature, with all the most bewitching outlines of woman, at the precise moment at which they are yet combined with all the most charming graces of childhood—that pure and fleeting moment which can only be translated by these two words, sweet fifteen. Beautiful chestnut hair, shaded with veins of gold, a brow which seemed chiselled marble, cheeks which seemed made of roses, a pale incarnadine, a flushed whiteness, an exquisite mouth, whence came a smile like a gleam of sunshine, and a voice like music, a head which Raphael would have given to Mary, or a neck which Jean Goujon would have given to Venus. And that nothing might be wanting to this ravishing form, the nose was not beautiful, it was pretty; neither straight nor curved, neither Italian nor Greek; It was the Parisian nose; that is, something sprightly, fine, irregular, and pure, the despair of painters and the charm of poets.

When Marius passed near her, he could not see her eyes, which were always cast down. He saw only her long chestnut lashes, eloquent of mystery and modesty. But that did not prevent the beautiful girl from smiling as she listened to the white-haired man who was speaking to her, and nothing was so transporting as this maidenly smile with these down-cast eyes.

At the first instant Marius thought it was another daughter of the same man, a sister doubtless of her whom he had seen before. But when the invariable habit of his promenade led him for the second time near the seat, and he had looked at her attentively, he recognised that she was the same. In six months the little girl had become a woman; that was all. Nothing is more frequent than this phenomenon. There is a moment when girls bloom out in a twinkling, and become roses all at once. Yesterday we left them children, to-day we find them dangerous.

She had not only grown; she had become idealized. As three April days are enough for certain trees to put on a covering of flowers, so six months had been enough for her to put on her mantle of beauty.

We sometimes see people, poor and mean, who seem to awaken, pass suddenly from indigence to luxury, incur expenses of all sorts, and become all at once splendid, prodigal and magnificent. That comes from interest received; yesterday was pay-day. The young girl had received her dividend.

And then she was no longer the school-girl with her plush hat, her merino dress, her shapeless shoes, and her red hands; taste had come to her with beauty. She was a woman well dressed, with a sort of simple and rich elegance without any particular style. She wore a dress of black damask, a mantle of the same, and a white crape hat. Her white gloves showed the delicacy of her hand which played with the Chinese ivory handle of her parasol, and her silk boot betrayed the smallness of her foot. When you passed near her, her whole toilet exhaled the penetrating fragrance of youth. As to the man, he was still the same. The second time that Marius came near her, the young girl raised her eyes; they were of a deep celestial blue, but in this veiled azure was nothing yet beyond the look of a child. She looked at Marius with indifference, as she would have looked at any little monkey playing under the sycamores, or the marble vase which cast its shadow over the bench; and Marius also continued his promenade thinking of something else.

He passed four or five times more by the seat where the young girl was, without even turning his eyes towards her. On the following days he came as usual to the Luxembourg; as usual he found "the father and daughter" there, but he paid no attention to them. He thought no more of this girl now that she was handsome, than he had thought of her when she was homely. He passed very near the bench on which she sat, because that was his habit.

## III.

## EFFECT OF SPRING.

One day the air was mild; the Luxembourg was flooded with sunshine and shadow, the sky was as clear as if the angels had washed it in the morning, the sparrows were twittering in the depths of the chesnut trees, Marius had opened his whole soul to nature, he was thinking of nothing, he was living and breathing, he passed near this seat, the young girl raised her eyes, their glances met. But what was there now in the glance of the young girl? Marius could not have told. There was nothing, and there was everything. It was a strange flash. She cast down her eyes, and he continued on his way. What he had seen was not the simple, artless eye of a child; it was a mysterious abyss, half-opened, then suddenly closed. There is a time when every young girl looks thus. Woe to him upon whom she looks!

This first glance of a soul which does not yet know itself is like the dawn in the sky. It is the awakening of something radiant and unknown. Nothing can express the dangerous charm of this unlooked for gleam which suddenly suffuses adorable mysteries, and which is made up of all the innocence of the present, and of all the passion of the future. It is a kind of irresolute lovingness which is revealed by chance, and which is waiting. It is a snare which Innocence unconsciously spreads, and in which she catches hearts without intending it, and without knowing it. It is a maiden glancing like a woman. It is rare that deep reverie is not born of this glance wherever it may fall. All that is pure, and all that is vestal, is concentrated in this celestial and mortal glance, which more than the most studied ogling of the coquette, has the magic power of suddenly forcing into bloom in the depths of a heart, this flower of the shade full of perfumes and poisons, which is called love.

At night, on retiring to his garret, Marius cast a look upon his dress, and for the first time perceived that he had the slovenliness, the indecency, and the unheard of stupidity, to promenade the Luxembourg with his "every day" suit, a hat broken near the band, coarse teamsters' boots, black pantaloons shiny at the knees, and a black coat threadbare at the elbows.

## IV.

## COMMENCEMENT OF A GREAT DISTEMPER.

The next day, at the usual hour, Marius took from his closet, his new coat, his new pantaloons, his new hat, his new boots; he dressed himself in this panoply complete, put on his gloves, prodigious prodigality, and went to the Luxembourg.

On the way, he met Courfeyrac, and pretended not to see him. Courfeyrac, on his return home, said to his friends: "I have just met Marius's new hat and coat, with Marius inside. Probably he was going to an examination. He looked stupid enough."

On reaching the Luxembourg, Marius took a turn round the fountain, and looked at the swans; then he remained a long time in contemplation before a statue, the head of which was black with moss, and which was minus a hip. Near the fountain was a big-bellied bourgeois of forty, holding a little boy of five by the hand, to whom he was saying: "Beware of extremes, my son. Keep thyself equally distant from despotism and from anarchy." Marius listened to this good bourgeois. Then he took another turn round the fountain. Finally, he went towards "his walk;" slowly, and as if with regret. One would have said that he was at once compelled to go and prevented from going. He was unconscious of all this, and thought he was doing as he did every day.

When he entered the walk he saw M. Leblanc and the young girl at the other end "on their seat." He buttoned his coat, stretched it down that there might be no wrinkles, noticed with some complaisance the lustre of his pantaloons, and marched upon the seat. There was something of attack in this march, and certainly a desire of conquest. I say, then, he marched upon the seat, as I would say: Hannibal marched upon Rome.

Beyond this, there was nothing which was not mechanical in all his movements, and he had in no wise interrupted the customary pre-occupations of his mind and his labor. He had a sharp singing sound in his ear. While approaching the seat, he was smoothing the wrinkles out of his coat, and his eyes were fixed on the young girl. It seemed to him as though she filled the whole extremity of the walk with a pale, bluish light.

As he drew nearer, his step became slower and slower. At some distance from the seat, long before he had reached the end of the walk, he stopped, and he did not himself know how it happened, but he turned back. He did not even say to himself that he would not go to the end. It was doubtful if the young girl could see him so far off, and notice his fine appearance in his new suit. However, he held himself very straight, so that he might look well, in case anybody who was behind should happen to notice him.

He reached the opposite end and then returned, and this time he approached a little nearer to the seat. He even came to within about three trees of it, but there he felt an indescribable lack of power to go further, and he hesitated. He thought he had seen the young girl's face bent towards him. Still he made a great and manly effort, conquered his hesitation, and continued his advance. In a few seconds, he was passing before the seat, erect and firm, blushing to his ears, without daring to cast a look to the right or the left, and with his hand in his coat like a statesman. At the moment he passed under the guns of the fortress, he felt a frightful palpitation of the heart. She wore, as on the previous day, her damask dress and her crape hat. He heard the sound of an ineffable voice, which might be "her voice." She was talking quietly. She was very pretty. He felt it, though he made no effort to see her. "She could not, however," thought he, "but have some esteem and consideration for me, if she knew that I was the real author of the dissertation on Marcos Obregon de la Ronda, which Monsieur François de Neufchâteau has put, as his own, at the beginning of his edition of *Gil Blas*!"



He passed the seat, went to the end of the walk, which was quite near, then turned and passed again before the beautiful girl. This time, he was very pale. Indeed, he was experiencing nothing that was not very disagreeable. He walked away from the seat and from the young girl, and although his back was turned, he imagined that she was looking at him; and that made him stumble. He made no effort to approach the seat again, he stopped midway of the walk, and sat down there—a thing which he never did—casting many side glances, and thinking, in the most indistinct depths of his mind, that after all it must be difficult for persons whose white hat and black dress he admired, to be absolutely insensible to his glossy pantaloons and his new coat.

At the end of a quarter of an hour, he rose, as if to recommence his walk towards this seat, which was encircled by a halo. He, however, stood silent and motionless. For the first time in fifteen months, he said to himself, that this gentleman, who sat there every day with his daughter, had undoubtedly noticed him, and probably thought his assiduity very strange. For the first time, also, he felt a certain irreverence in designating this unknown man, even in the silence of his thought, by the nickname of M. Leblanc.

He remained thus for some minutes with his head down tracing designs on the ground with a little stick which he had in his hand. Then he turned abruptly away from the seat, away from Monsieur Leblanc and his daughter, and went home. That day he forgot to go to dinner. At eight o'clock in the evening he discovered it, and as it was too late to go down to the Rue Saint Jacques, "no matter," said he, and he ate a piece of bread.

He did not retire until he had carefully brushed and folded his coat.

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## V

### SUNDRY THUNDERBOLTS FALL UPON MA'AM BOUGON.

Next day, Ma'am Bougon—thus Courfeyrac designated the old portress-landlady of the Gorbeau tenement—Ma'am Bougon was stupefied with astonishment to see Monsieur Marius go out again with his new coat.

He went again to the Luxembourg, but did not get beyond his seat midway of the walk. He sat down there as on the day previous, gazing from a distance and seeing distinctly the white hat, the black dress, and especially the bluish light. He did not stir from the seat, and did not go home until the gates of the Luxembourg were shut. He did not see Monsieur Leblanc and his daughter retire. He concluded from that that they left the garden by the gate on the Rue de l'Ouest. Later, some weeks afterwards, when he thought of it, he could not remember where he had dined that night.

The next day, for the third time, Ma'am Bougon was thunderstruck. Marius went out with his new suit. "Three days running!" she exclaimed: She made an attempt to follow him, but Marius walked briskly and with immense strides; it was a hippopotamus undertaking to catch a chamois. In two minutes she lost sight of him, and came

back out of breath, three quarters choked by her asthma, and furious. "The silly fellow," she muttered, "to put on his handsome clothes every day, and make people run like that!" Marius had gone to the Luxembourg.

The young girl was there with Monsieur Leblanc. Marius approached as near as he could, seeming to be reading a book, but he was still very far off; then he returned and sat down on his seat, where he spent four hours watching the artless little sparrows as they hopped along the walk; they seemed to him to be mocking him.

Thus a fortnight rolled away. Marius went to the Luxembourg, no longer to promenade, but to sit down, always in the same place, and without knowing why. Once there, he did not stir. Every morning he put on his new suit, not to be conspicuous, and he began again the next morning.

She was indeed of a marvellous beauty. The only remark which could be made, that would resemble a criticism, is that the contradiction between her look, which was sad, and her smile, which was joyous, gave to her countenance something a little wild, which produced this effect, that at certain moments this sweet face became strange without ceasing to be charming.

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## VI.

### TAKEN PRISONER.

On one of the last days of the second week, Marius was as usual sitting on his seat, holding in his hand an open book of which he had not turned a leaf for two hours. Suddenly he trembled. A great event was commencing at the end of the walk. Monsieur Leblanc and his daughter had left their seat, the daughter had taken the arm of the father, and they were coming slowly towards the middle of the walk where Marius was. Marius closed his book, then he opened it, then he made an attempt to read. He trembled. The halo was coming straight towards him, "O dear!" thought he, "I shall not have time to take an attitude." However, the man with the white hair and the young girl were advancing. It seemed to him that it would last a century, and that it was only a second. "What are they coming by here for?" he asked himself. "What! is she going to pass this place! Are her feet to press this ground in this walk, but a step from me?" He was overwhelmed, he would gladly have been very handsome, he would gladly have worn the cross of the Legion of Honor. He heard the gentle and measured sound of their steps approaching. He imagined that Monsieur Leblanc was hurling angry looks upon him. "Is he going to speak to me?" thought he. He bowed his head; when he raised it they were quite near him. The young girl passed, and in passing she looked at him. She looked at him steadily, with a sweet and thoughtful look which made Marius tremble from head to foot. It seemed to him that she reproached him for having been so long without coming to her, and that she said: "It is I who come." Marius was bewildered by these eyes full of flashing light and fathomless abysses.

He felt as though his brain were on fire. She had come to him, what happiness! And then, how she had looked at him! She seemed more beautiful than she had ever seemed before. Beautiful with a beauty which combined all of the woman with all of the angel, a beauty which would have made Petrarch sing and Dante kneel. He felt as though he was swimming in the deep blue sky. At the same time he was horribly disconcerted, because he had a little dust on his boots. He felt sure that she had seen his boots in this condition.

He followed her with his eyes till she disappeared, then he began to walk in Luxembourg like a madman. It is probable that at times he laughed, alone as he was, and spoke aloud. He was so strange and dreamy when near the child's nurses that every one thought he was in love with her. He went out of the Luxembourg to find her again in some street. He met Courfeyrac under the arches of the Odeon, and said: "Come and dine with me." They went to Rousseau's and spent six francs. Marius ate like an ogre. He gave six sous to the waiter. At dessert he said to Courfeyrac: "Have you read the paper? What a fine speech Audry de Puyraveau has made!" He was desperately in love.

After dinner he said to Courfeyrac, "Come to the theatre with me." They went to the Porte Saint Martin to see Frederick in *L'Auberge des Adrets*. Marius was hugely amused. At the same time he became still more strange and incomprehensible. On leaving the theatre, he refused to look at the garter of a little milliner who was crossing a gutter, and when Courfeyrac said: "*I would not object to putting that woman in my collection,*" it almost horrified him.

Courfeyrac invited him to breakfast next morning at the Café Voltaire. Marius went and ate still more than the day before. He was very thoughtful and yet very gay. One would have said that he seized upon all possible occasions to burst out laughing. To every country-fellow who was introduced to him he gave a tender embrace. "He is a comical fellow!" said Courfeyrac, aside to Jean Prouvaire. "No," replied Jean Prouvaire, "he is serious." He was serious, indeed. Marius was in this first vehement and fascinating period in which the grand passion commences. One glance had done all that. When the mine is loaded, and the match is ready, nothing is simpler. A glance is a spark. It was all over with him. Marius loved a woman. His destiny was entering upon the unknown.

The glances of women are like certain apparently peaceful but really formidable machines. You pass them every day quietly, with impunity, and without suspicion of danger. There comes a moment when you forget even that they are there. You come and go, you muse, and talk, and laugh. Suddenly you feel that you are seized! It is done. The wheels have caught you, the glance has captured you. It has taken you, no matter how or where, by any portion whatever of your thought which was trailing, through any absence of mind. You are lost. You will be drawn in entirely. A train of mysterious forces has gained possession of you. You struggle in vain. No human succor is possible. You will be drawn down from wheel to wheel, from anguish to anguish, from torture to torture. You, your mind, your fortune, your future, your soul; and you will not escape from the terrible machine, until, according as

you are in the power of a malevolent nature, or a noble heart, you shall be disfigured by shame or transfigured by love.

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## VII.

### ADVENTURES OF THE LETTER U ABANDONED TO CONJECTURE.

ISOLATION, separation from all things, pride, independence, a taste for nature, lack of every day material activity, life in one's self, the secret struggles of chastity, and an ecstasy of good will towards the whole creation, had prepared Marius for this possession which is called love. His worship for his father had become almost a religion, and, like all religion, had retired into the depths of his heart. He needed something above that. Love came.

A whole month passed during which Marius went every day to the Luxembourg. When the hour came, nothing could keep him away. "He is out at service," said Courfeyac. Marius lived in transports. It is certain that the young girl looked at him.

He finally grew bolder, and approached nearer to the seat. However he passed before it no more, obeying at once the instinct of timidity and the instinct of prudence, peculiar to lovers. He thought it better not to attract the "attention of the father." He formed his combinations of stations behind trees and the pedestals of statues, with consummate art, so as to be seen as much as possible by the young girl and as little as possible by the old gentleman. Sometimes he would stand for half an hour motionless behind some Leonidas or Spartacus with a book in his hands, over which his eyes, timidly raised, were looking for the young girl, while she, for her part, was turning her charming profile towards him, suffused with a smile. While yet talking in the most natural and quiet ways in the world with the white-haired man, she rested upon Marius all the dreams of a maidenly and passionate eye. Ancient and immemorial art which Eve knew from the first day of the world, and which every woman knows from the first of her life! Her tongue replied to the one and her eyes to the other.

We must, however, suppose that M. Leblanc perceived something of this at last, for often when Marius came, he would rise and begin to promenade. He had left their accustomed place, and had taken the seat at the corner end of the walk, near the Gladiator, as if to see whether Marius would not follow them. Marius did not understand it, and committed that blunder. "The father" began to be less punctual, and did not bring "his daughter" every day. Sometimes he came alone. Then Marius did not stay. Another blunder. Marius took no note of these symptoms. From the phase of timidity he had passed, a natural and inevitable progress, to the phase of blindness. His love grew. He dreamed of her every night. And then there came to him a good fortune for which he had not even hoped, oil upon the fire, double darkness upon his eyes. One night, at dusk, he found on the seat, with "M. Leblanc and his daughter" had just left, a handkerchief, a plain handkerchief without embroidery, but white, fine, and which appeared to him to exhale ineffable odors. He seized it in transport. This handkerchief

was marked with U. F. : Marius knew nothing of this beautiful girl, neither her family, nor her name, nor her dwelling ; these two letters were the first thing he had caught of her, adorable initials upon which he began straightway to build his castle. It was evidently her first name. Ursula, thought he, what a sweet name ! He kissed the handkerchief, inhaled its perfume, put it over his heart in the day-time, and at night went to sleep with it on his lips. "I feel her whole soul in it !" he exclaimed. This handkerchief belonged to the old gentleman, who had simply let it fall from his pocket.

For days and days after this piece of good-fortune, he always appeared at the Luxembourg kissing this handkerchief and placing it on his heart. The child did not understand this at all, and indicated it to him by signs, which he did not perceive. "O, modesty !" said Marius.

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## VIII.

### EVEN THE INVALIDES MAY BE LUCKY.

Since we have pronounced the word *modesty*, and since we conceal nothing, we must say that once however, through all his ecstasy, "his Ursula" gave him a very serious pang. It was upon one of the days when she prevailed upon M. Leblanc to leave the seat and to promenade on the walk. A brisk north-wind was blowing, which swayed the tops of the plane trees. Father and daughter, arm in arm, had just passed before Marius' seat. Marius had risen behind them and was following them with his eyes, as it was natural that he should in this desperate situation of his heart.

Suddenly a gust of wind, rather more lively than the rest, and probably intrusted with the little affairs of Spring, flew down from La Pepinière, rushed upon the walk, enveloped the young girl in a transporting tremor worthy of the nymphs of Virgil and the fauns of Theocritus, and raised her skirt, this skirt more sacred than that of Isis, almost to the height of the garter. A limb of exquisite mould was seen. Marius saw it. He was exasperated and furious.

The young girl had put down her dress with a divinely startled movement, he was outraged none the less. True, he was alone in the walk. But there might have been somebody there. And if any had been there ! Could one conceive of such a thing ? What she had done was horrible ! Alas, the poor child had done nothing ; there was but one culprit, the wind ; and yet Marius, in whom all the Bartholo which there is in Cherubin was confusedly trembling, was determined to be dissatisfied, and was jealous of his shadow. For it is thus that is awakened in the human heart and imposed upon man, even unjustly, the bitter and strange jealousy of the flesh. Besides, and throwing this jealousy out of consideration, there was nothing that was agreeable to him in the sight of that beautiful limb ; the white stocking of the first woman that came along would have given him more pleasure. When "his Ursula," reaching the end of the walk, returned with M. Leblanc, and passed before the seat on which Marius had again sat down,

Marius threw at her a cross and cruel look. The young girl slightly straightened back, with that elevation of the eyelids, which says : "Well, what is the matter with him ?"

That was "their first quarrel." Marius had hardly finished this scene with her when somebody came down the walk. It was an Invalide very much bent, wrinkled and pale with age, in the uniform of Louis XV., with the little oval patch of red cloth with crossed swords on his back, the soldier's Cross of St. Louis, and decorated also by a coat sleeve in which there was no arm, a silver chin, and a wooden leg. Marius thought he could discern that this man appeared to be very much pleased. It seemed to him even that the old cynic, as he hobbled along by him, had addressed to him a very fraternal and very merry wink, as if by some chance they had been put into communication and had enjoyed some dainty bit of good fortune together. What had he seen to be so pleased, this relic of Mars ? What had happened between this leg of wood and the other ? Marius had a paroxysm of jealousy. "Perhaps he was by !" said he ; "perhaps he saw !" And he would have been glad to exterminate the Invalide.

Time lending his aid, every point is blunted. This anger of Marius against "Ursula," however just and proper it might be, passed away. He forgave her at last : but it was a great effort ; he pouted at her three days. Meanwhile, in spite of all that, and because of all that, his passion was growing, and he was growing mad.

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## IX.

### AN ECLIPSE.

We have seen how Marius discovered, or thought he discovered, that her name was Ursula. Hunger comes with love. To know that her name was Ursula had been much ; it was little. In three or four weeks Marius had devoured this piece of good fortune. He desired another. He wished to know where she lived.

He had committed one blunder in falling into the snare of the seat by the Gladiator. He had committed a second by not remaining at the Luxembourg when Monsieur Leblanc came there alone. He committed a third, a monstrous one. He followed "Ursula."

She lived in the Rue de l'Ouest, in the least frequented part of it, in a new three-story house, of modest appearance. From that moment Marius added to his happiness in seeing her at the Luxembourg, the happiness of following her home.

His hunger increased. He knew her name, her first name, at least, the charming name, the real name of a woman ; he knew where she lived ; he desired to know who she was. One night after he had followed them home, and seen them disappear at the porte-cochère, he entered after them, and said boldly to the porter ; "Is it the gentleman on the first floor who has just come in ?" "No," answered the porter. "It is the gentleman on the third." Another fact. This success made Marius still bolder. "In front ?" he asked. "Faith !" said the porter, "the house is only built on the street." "And what is this

gentleman?" "He lives on his income, Monsieur. A very kind man, who does a great deal of good among the poor, though not rich." "What is his name?" continued Marius. The porter raised his head, and said: "Is Monsieur a detective?" Marius retired, much abashed, but still in great transports. He was getting on. "Good," thought he. "I know that her name is Ursula, that she is the daughter of a retired gentleman, and that she lives there, in the third story, in the Rue de l'Ouest."

Next day Monsieur Leblanc and his daughter made but a short visit to the Luxembourg; they went away while it was yet broad daylight. Marius followed them into the Rue de l'Ouest, as was his custom. On reaching the porte-cochère, Monsieur Leblanc passed his daughter in, and then stopped, and before entering himself, turned and looked steadily at Marius. The day after that they did not come to the Luxembourg. Marius waited in vain all day.

At nightfall he went to the Rue de l'Ouest, and saw a light in the windows of the third story. He walked beneath these windows until the light was put out.

The next day nobody at the Luxembourg. Marius waited all day, and then went to perform his night duty under the windows. That took him till ten o'clock in the evening. His dinner took care of itself. Fever supports the sick man, and love the lover. He passed a week in this way. Monsieur Leblanc and his daughter appeared at the Luxembourg no more. Marius made melancholy conjectures; he dared not watch the porte-cochère during the day. He limited himself to going at night to gaze upon the reddish light of the windows. At times he saw shadows moving, and his heart beat high.

On the eighth day when he reached the house, there was no light in the windows. "What!" said he, "the lamp is not yet lighted. But yet it is dark. Or they have gone out?" He waited till ten o'clock. Till midnight. Till one o'clock in the morning. No light appeared in the third story windows, and nobody entered the house. He went away very gloomy.

On the morrow—for he lived only from morrow to morrow; there was no longer any to-day, so to speak, to him—on the morrow he found nobody at the Luxembourg, he waited; at dusk he went to the house. No light in the windows; the blinds were closed; the third story was entirely dark. Marius knocked at the porte-cochère; went in and said to the porter: "The gentleman of the third floor?" "Moved," answered the porter. Marius tottered, and said feebly: "Since when?" "Yesterday." "Where does he live now?" "I don't know anything about it." "He has not left his new address, then?" "No." And the porter, looking up, recognised Marius. "What! it is you!" said he, "but decidedly, now, you do keep a bright look out."

## Book Seventh.

# PATRON MINETTE.

### I.

#### THE MINES AND THE MINERS.

Every human society has what is called in the theatres a *third sub-stage*. The social soil is mined everywhere, sometimes for good, sometimes for evil. These works are in strata; there are upper mines and lower mines. There is a top and a bottom in this dark sub-soil which sometimes sinks beneath civilization, and which our indifference and our carelessness trample under foot. The *Encyclopædia*, in the last century, was a mine almost on the surface. The dark caverns, these gloomy protectors of primitive Christianity, were awaiting only an opportunity to explode beneath the Cæsars, and to flood the human race with light. For in these sacred shades there is latent light. Volcanoes are full of a blackness, capable of flashing flames. All lava begins as midnight. The catacombs, where the first mass was said, were not merely the cave of Rome; they were the cavern of the world.

There is under the social structure, this complex wonder of a mighty burrow—of excavations of every kind; there is the religious mine, the philosophic mine, the political mine, the economic mine, the revolutionary mine. This pick with an idea, that pick with a figure, the other pick with a vengeance. They call and they answer from one catacomb to another. Utopias travel under ground in the passages. They branch out in every direction. They sometimes meet there and fraternize. Jean Jacques lends his pick to Diogenes, who lends him his lantern. Sometimes they fight. Calvin takes Socinius by the hair. But nothing checks or interrupts the tension of all these energies towards their object. The vast simultaneous activity, which goes to and fro, and up and down, and up again, in these dusky regions, and which slowly transforms the upper through the lower, and the outer through the inner; vast unknown swarming of works. Society has hardly a suspicion of this work of undermining which, without touching its surface, changes its substance. So many subterranean degrees, so many differing labors, so many varying excavations. What comes from all this deep delving? The future.

The deeper we sink the more mysterious are the workers. To a degree which social philosophy can recognise, the work is good; beyond this degree, it is doubtful and mixed; below, it becomes terrible. At a certain depth the excavations become impenetrable to the soul of civilization, the respirable limit of man is passed; the existence of monsters becomes possible.

The descending ladder is a strange one; each of its rounds corresponds to a step whereupon philosophy can set foot, and where we dis-



cover some one of her workers, sometimes divine, sometimes monstrous. Below John Huss is Luther; below Luther is Descartes; below Descartes is Voltaire; below Voltaire is Condorcet; below Condorcet is Robespierre; below Robespierre is Marat; below Marat is Babeuf. And that continues. Lower still, in dusky confusion, at the limit which separates the instinct from the invisible, glimpses are caught of other men in the gloom, who perhaps no longer exist. Those of yesterday are spectres; those of to-morrow are goblins. The embryonary work of the future is one of the visions of the philosopher. A *fœtus* world in limbo, what a wonderful profile! Saint Simon, Owen, Fourier, are there also, in lateral galleries:

Indeed, although an invisible divine chain links together all these subterranean pioneers, who almost always believe they are alone, yet are not, their labors are very diverse, and the glow of some is in contrast with the flame of others. Some are paradisaic, others are tragic. Nevertheless, be the contrast what it may, all these workers, from the highest to the darkest, from the wisest to the silliest, have one thing in common, and that is disinterestedness. Marat, like Jesus, forgets himself. They throw self aside; they omit self; they do not think of self. They see something other than themselves. They have a light in their eyes, and this light is searching for the absolute. The highest has all heaven in his eyes; the lowest, enigmatical as he may be, has yet beneath his brows the pale glow of the infinite. Venerate him, whatever he may do, who has this sign, the star-eye.

The shadow-eye is the other sign. With it evil commences. Before him whose eye has no light, reflect and tremble. Social order has its black miners. There is a point where undermining becomes burial, and where light is extinguished.

Below all these mines which we have pointed out, below all these galleries, below all this immense underground venous system of progress and of utopia, far deeper in the earth, lower than Marat, lower than Babeuf, lower, much lower, and without any connexion with the upper galleries, is the last sap. A fear-inspiring place. That is what we have called the third sub-stage. It is the grave of the depths. It is the cave of the blind. *Inferi*. This communicates with the gulfs.

There disinterestedness vanishes. The demon is dimly rough-hewn; every one for himself. The eyeless I howls, searches, gropes, and gnaws. The social Ugolino is in this gulf.

The savage outlines which prowl over this grave, half brute, half phantom, have no thought for universal progress, they ignore ideas and words, they have no care but for individual glut. They are almost unconscious, and there is in them a horrible defacement. They have two mothers, both stepmothers, ignorance and misery. They have one guide, want; and their only form of satisfaction is appetite. They are voracious as beasts, that is to say ferocious, not like the tyrant, but like the tiger. From suffering these goblins pass to crime; fated filiation, giddy procreation, the logic of darkness. What crawls in the third sub-stage is no longer the stifled demand for the absolute, it is the protest of matter. Man there becomes dragon. Hunger and thirst are the point of departure; Satan is the point of arrival.

## II.

## BABET, GUEULEMER, CLAQUESOUS, AND MONTPARNASSE.

A quartette of bandits, Claquesous, Gueulemer, Babet, and Montparnasse, ruled from 1830 to 1835 over the third sub-stage of Paris. Gueulemer was a Hercules without a pedestal. His cave was the Arche-Marion-sewer. He was six feet high, and had a marble chest, brazen biceps, cavernous lungs, a colossus's body, and a bird's skull. You would think you saw the Farnese Hercules dressed in duck pantaloons and a cotton-velvet waistcoat. Gueulemer, built in this sculptural fashion, could have subdued monsters; he found it easier to become one. Low forehead, large temples, less than forty, the foot of a goose, coarse short hair, a bushy cheek, a wild boar's beard; from this you see the man. His muscles asked for work, his stupidity would have none. This was a huge lazy force. He was an assassin through nonchalance.

The diaphaneity of Babet contrasted with the meatiness of Gueulemer. Babet was thin and shrewd. He was transparent, but impenetrable. You could see the light through his bones, but nothing through his eye. He professed to be a chemist. He had been a bar-keeper for Bobèche, and clown for Bobino. He had played vaudeville at Saint Mihiel. He was an affected man, a great talker, who italicized his smiles and quoted his gestures. His business was to sell plaster busts and portraits of the "head of the Government" in the street. Moreover, he pulled teeth. He had exhibited monstrosities at fairs, and had a booth with a trumpet and this placard: "Babet, dental artist, member of the Academies, physical experimenter on metals and metalloids, extirpates teeth, removes stumps left by other dentists. Price: one tooth, one franc fifty centimes; two teeth, two francs; three teeth, two francs fifty centimes. Improve your opportunity." (This "improve your opportunity," meant: "get as many pulled as possible.") He had been married, and had had children. What had become of his wife and children, he did not know. He had lost them as one loses his pocket-handkerchief. A remarkable exception in the obscure world to which he belonged, Babet read the papers. One day, during the time he had his family with him in his travelling booth, he had read in the *Messenger* that a woman had been delivered of a child, likely to live, which had the face of a calf; and he had exclaimed: "*There is a piece of good luck! My wife hasn't the sense to bring me a child like that.*" Since then, he had left everything, "to take Paris in hand." His own expression.

What was Claquesous? He was night. Before showing himself, he waited till the sky was dabbled with black. At night he came out of a hole, which he went into again before day. Where was this hole? Nobody knew. In the most perfect obscurity; and to his accomplices, he always turned his back when he spoke. Was his name Claquesous? No. He said: "My name is Nothing-at-all." If a candle was brought, he put on a mask. He was a ventriloquist. Babet said: "*Claquesous is a night-bird with two voices.*" Claquesous was restless, roving, terrible. It was not certain that he had a name, Claquesous being a nickname; it was not certain that he had a voice, his chest speaking oftener than his mouth; it was not certain that he had a face, nobody having ever seen

anything but his mask. He disappeared as if he sank into the ground; he came like an apparition.

A mournful sight was Montparnasse. Montparnasse was a child; less than twenty, with a pretty face, lips like cherries, charming black looks, the glow of spring in his eyes; he had all the vices and aspired to all the crimes. The digestion of what was bad gave him an appetite for what was worse. He was the *gamin* turned vagabond, and the vagabond become an assassin. He was genteel, effeminate, graceful, robust, weak, and ferocious. He wore his hat turned upon the left side, to make room for the tuft of hair, according to the fashion of 1829. He lived by robbery. His coat was of the most fashionable cut, but threadbare. Montparnasse was a fashion-plate living in distress and committing murders. The cause of all the crimes of this young man was his desire to be well dressed. The first grisette who had said to him: "You are handsome," had thrown the stain of darkness into his heart, and had made a Cain of this Abel. Thinking that he was handsome, he had desired to be elegant; now the first of elegances is idleness; idleness for a poor man is crime. Few prowlers were so much feared as Montparnasse. At eighteen, he had already left several corpses in his track. More than one traveller lay in the shadow of this wretch, with extended arms and with his face in a pool of blood. Frizzled, pomaded, with slender waist, hips like a woman, the bust of a Prussian officer, a buzz of admiration about him from the girls of the boulevard, an elaborately-tied cravat, a slung-shot in his pocket, a flower in his button-hole; such was this charmer of the sepulchre.

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### III

#### COMPOSITION OF THE BAND.

These four bandits formed a sort of Proteus, winding through the police and endeavoring to escape from the indiscreet glances of Vidocq "under various form, tree, flame and fountain," lending each other their names and their tricks, concealing themselves in their own shadow, each a refuge and a hiding-place for the others, throwing off their personalities, as one takes off a false nose at a masked ball, sometimes simplifying themselves till they were but one, sometimes multiplying themselves till Coco Lacour himself took them to be a multitude.

These four men were not four men; it was a sort of mysterious robber with four heads preying upon Paris by the wholesale; it was the monstrous polyp of evil which inhabits the crypt of society.

By means of their ramifications, and the underlying network of their relations, Babet, Gueulemer, Claquesous and Montparnasse, controlled the general lying-in-wait business of the Department of the Seine. Originators of ideas in this line, men of midnight imagination came to them for the execution. The four villains being furnished with the single draft, they took charge of putting it on the stage. They worked upon scenario. They were always in condition to furnish a company proportioned and suitable to any enterprise which stood in need of aid, and was sufficiently lucrative. A crime being in search of arms, they

sublet accomplices to it. They had a company of actors of darkness at the disposition of every cavernous tragedy.

They usually met at night-fall, their waking hour, in the waste grounds near La Salpêtrière. There they conferred. They had the twelve dark hours before them; they allotted their employ.

*Patron-Minette*, such was the name which was given in subterranean society to the association of these four men. In the old, popular, fantastic language, which now is dying out every day, *Patron-Minette* means morning, just as *entre chien et loup* [between dog and wolf,] means night. This appellation, *Patron-Minette*, probably came from the hour at which their work ended, the dawn being the moment for the disappearance of phantoms and the separation of bandits. These four were known by this title. When the Chief Judge of the Assizes visited Lacenaire in prison, he questioned him in relation to some crime which Lacenaire denied. "Who did do it?" asked the Judge. Lacenaire made this reply, enigmatical to the magistrate, but clear to the police: "*Patron-Minette*, perhaps."

Sometimes a play may be imagined from the announcement of the characters; so too, we may almost understand what a band is from the list of bandits. We give—for these names are preserved in the documents—the appellations to which the principal subordinates of *Patron-Minette* responded: Panchaud, alias Printanier, alias Bigrenaille. Brujon. (There was a dynasty of Brujons; we shall say something about it hereafter.) Boulatruelle, the road-mender, already introduced. Lavveuve, Finistère, Homer—Hogu, negro; Mardisoir, Dépêche, Faunteroy, alias Bouquetière, Glorieux, a liberated convict, Barrécarrosse, alias Monsieur Dupont, L'esplanade-du-Sud, Poussagrive, Carmagnolet, Kruideniers, alias Bizarro, Mangedentelle, Les-pieds-en-l'air, Demi-liard, alias Deux-Milliards, etc., etc.

We pass over some of them, and not the worst. These names have faces. They express not only beings, but species. Each of these names answers to a variety of these shapeless toadstools of the cellars of civilization. These beings, by no means free with their faces, were not of those whom we see passing in the streets. During the day, wearied out by their savage nights, they went away to sleep, sometimes in the parget-kilns, sometimes in the abandoned quarries of Montmartre or Montrouge, sometimes in the sewers. They burrowed.

What has become of these men? They still exist. They have always existed. Horace speaks of them: *Ambubaiarum collegia, pharmacopolæ, mendici, mimæ*; and so long as society shall be what it is, they will be what they are. Under the dark vault of their cave, they are for ever re-produced from the ooze of society. They return, spectres, always the same; but they bear the same name no longer, and they are no longer in the same skins. The individuals extirpated, the tribe still exists. They have always the same faculties. From the beggar to the prowler the race preserves its purity. They divine purses in pockets, they scent watches in fobs. Gold and silver to them are odorous. There are simple bourgeois of whom you might say that they have a robable appearance. These men follow these bourgeois patiently. When a foreigner or a countryman passes by they have spider thrills. Such men, when, towards midnight, on a lone boulevard, you meet them or

catch a glimpse of them, are terrifying. They seem not men, but forms fashioned of the living dark; you would say that they are generally an integral portion of the darkness, that they are not distinct from it, that they have no other soul than the gloom, and that it is only temporarily and to live for a few minutes a monstrous life, that they are disaggregated from the night.

What is required to exorcise these goblins? Light. Light in floods. No bat resists the dawn. Illuminate the bottom of society.

## Book Eighth.

### THE NOXIOUS POOR.

#### I.

MARIUS, LOOKING FOR A GIRL WITH A HAT, MEETS A MAN WITH A CAP.

Summer passed, then autumn; winter came. Neither M. Leblanc nor the young girl had set foot in the Luxembourg. Marius had now but one thought, to see that sweet, that adorable face again. He searched continually; he searched everywhere; he found nothing. He was no longer Marius the enthusiastic dreamer, the resolute man, ardent yet firm, the bold challenger of destiny, the brain which projected and built future upon future, the young heart full of plans, projects, prides, ideas and desires; he was a lost dog. He fell into a melancholy. It was all over with him. Work disgusted him, walking fatigued him, solitude wearied him, vast nature, once so full of forms, of illuminations, of voices, of counsels, of perspectives, of horizons, of teachings, was now a void before him. It seemed to him that everything had disappeared. He was still full of thought, for he could not be otherwise; but he no longer found pleasure in his thoughts. To all which they were silently but incessantly proposing to him, he answered in the gloom: What is the use?

He reproached himself a hundred times. Why did I follow her? I was so happy in seeing her only! She looked upon me; was not that infinite? She had the appearance of loving me. Was not that everything? I desired to have what? There is nothing more after that. I was a fool. It is my fault, etc., etc. Courfeyrac, to whom he confided nothing—that was his nature—but who found out a little of everything—that was his nature also; had begun by felicitating him upon being in love, and wondering at it withal; then seeing Marius fallen into this melancholy, he had at last said to him: “I see that you have been nothing but an animal. Here, come to the Chaumière.”

Once, confiding in a beautiful September sun, Marius allowed himself to be taken to the Bal de Sceaux, by Courfeyrac, Bossuet and Grantaire, hoping—what a dream!—that he might possibly find her there. We need not say that he did not see her whom he sought. “But yet it is here

that all the lost women are to be found," muttered Grantaire aside. Marius left his friends at the ball, and went back on foot, alone, tired, feverish, with sad and troubled eyes, in the night, overcome by the noise and dust of the joyous coaches full of singing parties who passed by him returning from the festival, while he, discouraged, was breathing in the pungent odor of the walnut trees by the wayside, to restore his brain.

He lived more and more alone, bewildered, overwhelmed, given up to his inward anguish, walking to and fro in his grief like a wolf in a cage, seeking everywhere for the absent, stupefied with love.

At another time, an accidental meeting produced a singular effect upon him. In one of the little streets in the neighborhood of the Boulevard des Invalides, he saw a man dressed like a laborer, wearing a cap with a long visor, from beneath which escaped a few locks of very white hair. Marius was struck by the beauty of this white hair, and noticed the man who was walking with slow steps and seemed absorbed in painful meditation. Strangely enough, it appeared to him that he recognised M. Leblanc. It was the same hair, the same profile, as far as the cap allowed him to see, the same manner, only sadder. But why these working-man's clothes? what did that mean? what did this disguise signify? Marius was astounded. When he came to himself, his first impulse was to follow the man; who knows but he had at last caught the trace which he was seeking? At all events, he must see the man again nearer, and clear up the enigma. But this idea occurred to him too late, the man was gone. He had taken some little side-street, and Marius could not find him again. This adventure occupied his mind for a few days, and then faded away. "After all," said he to himself, "it is probably only a resemblance."

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## II.

### A WAIF. •

Marius still lived in the Gorbéau tenement. He paid no attention to anybody there.

At this time, it is true, there were no occupants remaining in the house but himself and those Jondrettes whose rent he had once paid, without having ever spoken, however, either to the father, or to the mother, or to the daughters. The other tenants had moved away or died, or had been turned out for not paying their rent.

One day, in the course of this winter, the sun shone a little in the afternoon, but it was the second of February. Marius had just left his cavern; night was falling. It was his dinner hour; for it was still necessary for him to go to dinner: alas! oh, infirmity of the ideal passions! He had just crossed his door-sill which Ma'am Bougon was sweeping at that very moment, muttering at the same time this memorable monologue: "What is there that is cheap now? everything is dear. There is nothing but people's trouble that is cheap; that comes for nothing, people's trouble."

Marius went slowly up the boulevard towards the barrière, on the way to the Rue Saint Jacques. He was walking thoughtfully, with his head

down. Suddenly he felt that he was elbowed in the dusk; he turned, and saw two young girls in rags, one tall and slender, the other a little shorter, passing rapidly by, breathless, frightened, and apparently in flight; they had met him, had not seen him, and had jostled him in passing. Marius could see in the twilight their livid faces, their hair tangled and flying, their frightful bonnets, their tattered skirts, and their naked feet. As they ran they were talking to each other. The taller one said in a very low voice: "The *cognes* came. They just missed *pin-cer* me at the *demi-circle*." The other answered: "I saw them. I *cavalé, cavalé, cavalé*."

Marius understood, through this dismal argot, that the gendarmes, or the city police, had not succeeded in seizing these two girls, and that the girls had escaped. They plunged in under the trees of the boulevard behind him, and for a few seconds made a kind of dim whiteness in the obscurity which soon faded out. Marius stopped for a moment.

He was about to resume his course, when he perceived a little greyish packet on the ground at his feet. He stooped down and picked it up. It was a sort of envelope which appeared to contain papers. "Good," said he, "those poor creatures must have dropped this!" He retraced his steps, he called, he did not find them; he concluded they were already beyond hearing, put the packet in his pocket, and went to dinner. On his way, in an alley on the Rue Mouffetard, he saw a child's coffin covered with a black cloth, placed upon three chairs and lighted by a candle. The two girls of the twilight returned to his mind. "Poor mothers," thought he; "there is one thing sadder than to see their children die—to see them lead evil lives." Then these shadows which had varied his sadness went out from his thoughts, and he fell back into his customary train. He began to think of his six months of love and happiness in the open air and the broad daylight under the beautiful trees of the Luxembourg.

"How dark my life has become!" said he to himself. "Young girls still pass before me. Only formerly they were angels: now they are ghouls."

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### III.

#### QUADRIFRONS.

In the evening, as he was undressing to go to bed, he happened to feel in his coat-pocket the packet which he had picked up on the boulevard. He had forgotten it. He thought it might be well to open it, and that the packet might perhaps contain the address of the young girls, if, in reality, it belonged to them, or at all events the information necessary to restore it to the person who had lost it. He opened the envelope. It was unsealed, and contained four letters, also unsealed. The addresses were upon them. All four exhaled an odor of wretched tobacco. The first letter was addressed: *To Madame, Madame the Marchioness de Grucherau, Square opposite the Chamber of Deputies, No. —*. Marius said to himself that he should probably find in this letter the information of which he was in search, and that, moreover, as

the letter was not sealed, probably it might be read without impropriety. It was in these words :

“Madame the Marchioness :

“The virtue of kindness and piety is that which binds society most closely. Call up your christian sentiment, and cast a look of compassion upon this unfortunate Spanish victim of loyalty and attachment to the sacred cause of legitimacy, which he has paid for with his blood, consecrated his fortune, wholly, to defend this cause, and to-day finds himself in the greatest misery. He has no doubt that your honorable self will furnish him assistance to preserve an existence extremely painful for a soldier of education and of honor full of wounds, reckons in advance upon the humanity which animates you, and upon the interest which Madame the Marchioness feels in a nation so unfortunate. Their prayer will not be in vain, and their memory will retain her charming souvenir.

“From my respectful sentiments with which I have the honor to be

“Madame,

“DON ALVARES, Spanish captain of cavalry, royalist refugee in France, who finds himself travelling for his country, and resources fail him to continue his travels.”

No address was added to the signature. Marius hoped to find the address in the second letter, the superscription of which ran : *To Madame, Madame the Comtess de Montvernet, Rue Cassette, No. 9.* Marius read as follows :

“Madame the Comtess,

“It is an unfortunnnate mothur of a family of six children the last of whom is only eight months old. Me sick since my last lying-in, abandoned by my husband for five months haveing no ressource in the world the most frightful indigance.

“In the hope of Madame the Comtessc, she has the honor to be, Madame, with a profound respect,

“Mother BALIZARD.”

Marius passed to the third letter, which was, like the preceding, a begging one : it read :

“Monsieur Pabourgeot, elcctor, wholesale merchant-milliner, Rue Saint Denis, corner of the Rue aux Fers.

“I take the liberty to address you this letter to pray you to accord me the pretious favor of your sympathies and to interest you in a man of letters who has just sent a drama to the Théâtre Français. Its subject is historical, and the action takes place in Auvergne in the time of the Empire : Its style, I believe, is natural, laconic, and perhaps has some merit. There arc verses to be sung in four places. The comic, the serious, the unforeseen, mingle themselves with the variety of the characters and with a tint of romance spread lightly over all the plot which advances misteriously, and by striking terns, to a denouement in the midst of several hits of splendid scenes.

“My principal object is to satisfie the desire which animates progres-



sively the man of our century, that is to say, fashion, that capricious and grotesque weathercock which changes almost with every new wind. In spite of these qualities, I have reason to fear that jealousy, the selfishness of the privileged authors, may secure my exclusion from the theatre, for I am not ignorant of the distaste with which new comers are swallowed.

"Monsieur Pabourgeot, your just reputation as an enlightened protector of literary fokes emboldens me to send my daughter to you, who will expose to you our indignant situation, wanting bread and fire in this wynter season. To tell you that I pray you to accept the homage which I desire to offer you in my drama and in all those which I make, is to prove to you how ambitious I am of the honor of sheltering myself under your aegis, and of adorning my writings with your name. If you deign to honor me with the most modest offering, I shall occupy myself immediately in making a piесе of verse for you to pay my trihut of recognition. This piесе, which I shall endeavor to render as perfect as possible, will be sent to you before being inserted in the beginning of the drama and given upon the stage.

"To Monsieur

"and Madam Pabourgeot,

"My most respectful homage,

"GENFLOT, man of letters.

"P. S. Were it only forty sous.

"Excuse me for sending my daughter and for not presenting myself, but sad motives of dress do not permit me, *alaà!* to go out —"

Marius finally opened the fourth letter. There was on the address: *To the beneficent gentleman of the church Saint Jaques du Haut Pas.* It contained these few lines:

"Beneficent man,

"If you will deign to accompany my daughter, you will see a miserable calamity, and I will show you my certificates. At the sight of these writings your generous soul will be moved with a sentiment of lively benevolence, for true philosophers always experience vivid emotions. Agree, compassionate man, that one must experience the most cruel necessity, and that it is very painful, to obtain relief, to have it attested by authority, as if we were not free to suffer and to die of inanition while waiting for some one to relieve our misery. The fates are very cruel to some and too lavish or too careful to others.

"I await your presence or your offering, if you deign to make it, and I pray you to have the kindness to accept the respectful sentiments with which I am proud to be,

"Truly magnanimous man,

"Your very humble

"And very obedient servant,

"P. FABANTOU, dramatic artist."

After reading these four letters, Marius did not find himself much wiser than before. In the first place, none of the signers gave his address. Then they seemed to come from four different individuals, Don Alvarès, Mother Balizard, the poet Genflot, and the dramatic artist Fabântou; but, strangely enough, these letters were all four written in the same hand. What was the conclusion from that, unless that they came from the same person? Moreover, and this rendered the conjecture still more probable, the paper, coarse and yellow, was the same in all four, the odor of tobacco was the same, and although there was an evident endeavor to vary the style, the same faults of orthography were reproduced with a very quiet certainty, and Genflot, the man of letters, was no more free from them than the Spanish captain. To endeavor to unriddle this little mystery was a useless labor. If it had not been a waif, it would have had the appearance of a mystification. Marius was too sad to take a joke kindly even from chance, or to lend himself to the game which the street pavement seemed to wish to play with him. It appeared to him that he was like Colin Maillard among the four letters, which were mocking him. Nothing, however, indicated that these letters belonged to the girls whom Marius had met on the boulevard. After all, they were but waste paper evidently without value. Marius put them back into the envelope, threw it into a corner, and went to bed.

About seven o'clock in the morning, he had got up and breakfasted, and was trying to set about his work, when there was a gentle rap at his door. As he owned nothing, he never locked his door, except sometimes, and that very rarely, when he was about a pressing piece of work. And, indeed, even when absent, he left his key in the lock. "You will be robbed," said Ma'am Bougon. "Of what?" said Marius. The fact is, however, that one day somebody had stolen an old pair of boots, to the great triumph of Ma'am Bougon. There was a second rap, very gentle like the first. "Come in," said Marius. The door opened. "What do you want, Ma'am Bougon?" asked Marius, without raising his eyes from the books and papers which he had on his table. A voice, which was not Ma'am Bougon's, answered: "I beg your pardon, Monsieur ——" It was a hollow, cracked, smothered, rasping voice, the voice of an old man, roughened by brandy and by liquors. Marius turned quickly and saw a young girl.

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#### IV

##### A ROSE IN MISERY.

A girl who was quite young, was standing in the half-opened door. The little round window through which the light found its way into the garret was exactly opposite the door, and lit up this form with a pallid light. It was a pale, puny, meagre creature, nothing but a chemise and a skirt covered a shivering and chilly nakedness. A string for a belt, a string for a head-dress, sharp shoulders protruding from the chemise, a blond and lymphatic pallor, dirty shoulder-blades, red hands, the mouth open and sunken, some teeth gone, the eyes dull, bold and drooping, the form of an unripe young girl, and the look of a corrupted old

woman; fifty years joined with fifteen; one of those beings who are both feeble and horrible at once, and who make those shudder whom they do not make weep.

Marius arose and gazed with a kind of astonishment upon this being, so much like the shadowy forms which pass across our dreams. The most touching thing about it was that this young girl had not come into the world to be ugly. In her early childhood, she must have even been pretty. The grace of her youth was still struggling against the hideous old age brought on by debauchery and poverty. A remnant of beauty was dying out upon this face of sixteen, like the pale sun which is extinguished by the frightful clouds at the dawn of a winter's day.

This face was not absolutely unknown to Marius. He thought he remembered having seen it somewhere. "What do you wish, Mademoiselle?" asked he. The young girl answered with her voice like a drunken galley-slave's: "Here is a letter for you, Monsieur Marius." She called Marius by his name; he could not doubt that her business was with him; but what was this girl? how did she know his name?

Without waiting for an invitation, she entered. She entered resolutely, looking at the whole room and the unmade bed with a sort of assurance that chilled the heart. She was bare-footed. Great holes in her skirt revealed her long limbs and her sharp knees. She was shivering. She had really in her hand a letter which she presented to Marius. Marius, in opening this letter, noticed that the enormously large wafer was still wet. The message could not have come far. He read:

"My amiable neighbor, young man,

"I have learned your kindness towards me, that you have paid my rent six months ago. I bless you, young man. My eldest daughter will tell you that we have been without a morsel of bread for two days, four persons, and my spouse sick. If I am not desseived by my thoughts, I think I may hope that your generous heart will soften at this exposure, and that the desire will subjugate you of being propitious to me by deigning to lavish upon me some light gift.

I am with the distinguished consideration which is due to the benefactors of humanity,

JONDRETTE.

"P. S. My daughter will await your orders, dear Monsieur Marius."

This letter, in the midst of the obscure accident which had occupied Marius's thoughts since the previous evening, was a candle in a cave. Everything was suddenly cleared up. This letter came from the same source as the other four. It was the same writing, the same style, the same orthography, the same paper, the same odor of tobacco. There were five missives, five stories, five names, five signatures, and a single signer. The Spanish Captain Don Alvarès, the unfortunate mother Balizard, the dramatic poet Genflot, the old comedy writer Fabantou, were all four named Jondrette, if indeed the name of Jondrette himself was Jondrette.

During the now rather long time that Marius had lived in the tenement, he had had, as we have said, but very few opportunities to see, or even catch a glimpse of his very poor neighbors. His mind was elsewhere, and where the mind is, thither the eyes are directed. He must

have met the Jondrettes in the alley and on the stairs, more than once, but to him they were only shadows; he had taken so little notice, that on the previous evening he had brushed against the Jondrette girls upon the boulevard without recognising them; for it was evidently they; and it was with great difficulty that this girl, who had just come into his room, had awakened in him, beneath his disgust and pity, a vague remembrance of having met with her elsewhere.

Now he saw everything clearly. He understood that the occupation of his neighbor Jondrette in his distress, was to work upon the sympathies of benevolent persons; that he procured their addresses, and that he wrote under assumed names letters to people whom he deemed rich and compassionate, which his daughters carried, at their risk and peril; for this father was one who risked his daughters; he was playing a game with destiny, and he put them into the stake. Marius understood, to judge by their flight in the evening, by their breathlessness, by their terror, by those words of argot which he had heard, that probably these unfortunate things were carrying on also some of the secret trades of darkness, and that from all this the result was, in the midst of human society constituted as it is, two miserable beings who were neither children, nor girls, nor women, a species of impure yet innocent monsters produced by misery. Sad creatures without name, without age, without sex, to whom neither good nor evil were any longer possible, and for whom, on leaving childhood, there is nothing more in this world, neither liberty, nor virtue, nor responsibility. Souls blooming yesterday, faded to-day, like those flowers which fall in the street and are bespattered with mud before a wheel crushes them.

Meantime, while Marius fixed upon her an astonished and sorrowful look, the young girl was walking to and fro in the room with the boldness of a spectre. She moved the chairs, she disarranged the toilet articles on the bureau, she felt of Marius's clothes, she searched over what there was in the corners. "Ah," said she, "you have a mirror!" And she hummed, as if she had been alone, snatches of songs, light refrains which were made dismal by her harsh and guttural voice. Beneath this boldness could be perceived an indescribable constraint, restlessness, and humility. Effrontery is a shame.

Nothing was more sorrowful than to see her amusing herself, and, so to speak, fluttering about the room with the movements of a bird which is startled by the light, or which has a wing broken. You felt that under other conditions of education and of destiny, the gay and free manner of this young girl might have been something sweet and charming. Never among animals does the creature which is born to be a dove change into an osprey. That is seen only among men.

Marius was reflecting, and let her go on. She went to the table. "Ah!" said she, "books!" A light flashed through her glassy eye. She resumed, and her tone expressed that happiness of being able to boast of something, to which no human creature is insensible. "I can read, I can." She hastily caught up the book which lay open on the table, and read fluently: "—General Baudin received the order to take five battalions of his brigade and carry the chateau of Hougomont, which is in the middle of the plain of Waterloo—". She stopped: "Ah, Waterloo! I know that. It is a battle in old times. My father was

there; my father served in the armies. We are jolly good Bonapartists at home, that we are. Against the English, Waterloo is."

She put down the book, took up a pen, and exclaimed: "And I can write, too!" She dipped the pen in the ink, and turning towards Marius: "Would you like to see? Here, I am going to write a word to show." And before he had time to answer, she wrote upon a sheet of blank paper which was on the middle of the table: "*The Cognes are here.*" Then throwing down the pen: "There are no mistakes in spelling. You can look. We have received an education, my sister and I. We have not always been what we are. We were not made——" Here she stopped, fixed her faded eye upon Marius, and burst out laughing, saying in a tone which contained complete anguish stifled by complete cynicism: "Bah!"

She went to Marius, and laid her hand on his shoulder: "You pay no attention to me, but I know you, Monsieur Marius. I meet you here on the stairs, and then I see you visiting a man named Father Mabeuf, who lives out by Austerlitz, sometimes, when I am walking that way. That becomes you very well, your tangled hair." Her voice tried to be very low. Some of her words were lost in their passage from the larynx to the lips, as upon a key-board in which some notes are missing.

Marius had drawn back quietly. "Mademoiselle," said he, with his cold gravity, "I have here a packet, which is yours, I think. Permit me to return it to you." And he handed her the envelope, which contained the four letters.

She clasped her hands and exclaimed: "We have looked everywhere!" Then she snatched the packet, and opened the envelope, saying: "Lordy, Lordy, haven't we looked, my sister and I? And you have found it! on the boulevard, didn't you? It must have been on the boulevard? You see, this dropped when we ran. It was my brat of a sister who made the stupid blunder. When we got home, we could not find it."

Meanwhile, she had unfolded the petition addressed "to the beneficent gentleman of the church Saint Jacques du Haut Pas." "Here!" said she, "this is for the old fellow who goes to mass. And this too is the hour. I am going to carry it to him. He will give us something perhaps for breakfast." Then she began to laugh, and added: "Do you know what it will be if we have breakfast to-day? It will be that we shall have had our breakfast, for day before yesterday, our dinner for day before yesterday, our breakfast for yesterday, and dinner for yesterday, all that at one time this morning. Yes! zounds! if you're not satisfied, stuff till you burst, dogs!"

This reminded Marius of what the poor girl had come to his room for. He felt in his waistcoat, he found nothing there. The young girl continued seeming to talk as if she were no longer conscious that Marius was there present. "Sometimes I go away at night. Sometimes I do not come back. Before coming to this place, the other winter, we lived under the arches of the bridges. We hugged close to each other so as not to freeze. My little sister cried. How chilly the water is! When I thought of drowning myself, I said: No; it is too cold. I go all alone when I want to, I sleep in the ditches sometimes. Do you know, at night, when I walk on the boulevard, I see the trees like gibbets, I

see all the great black houses like the towers of Notre Dame, I imagine that the white walls are the river, I say to myself: Here, there is water there! The stars are like illumination lamps, one would say that they smoke, and that the wind blows them out, I am confused, as if I had horses breathing in my ear; though it is night, I hear hand organs and spinning wheels, I don't know what. I think that somebody is throwing stones at me, I run without knowing it, it is all a whirl. When one has not eaten, it is very queer." And she looked at him with a wandering eye.

After a thorough exploration of his pockets, Marius had at last got together five francs and sixteen sous. This was at the time all that he had in the world. "That is enough for my dinner to-day," thought he, "to-morrow we will see." He took the sixteen sous, and gave the five francs to the young girl. She took the piece eagerly. "Good," said she, "there is some sunshine!" And as if the sun had had the effect to loosen an avalanche of argot in her brain, she continued: "Five francs! a shiner! a monarch! in this *piolle*! it is *chenâtre*! You are a good *mion*. I gave you my *palpitant*. Bravo for the *fanandels*! Two days of *pivois*! and of *viandemuche*! and of *fricotmar*! we shall *pitancer chenument*! and *bonne mouise*!"

She made a low bow to Marius, then a familiar wave of the hand, and moved towards the door, saying: "Good morning, monsieur. It is all the same. I am going to find my old man." On her way she saw on the bureau a dry crust of bread moulding there in the dust; she sprang upon it, and bit it, muttering: "That is good! it is hard! it breaks my teeth!" Then she went out.

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## V

### THE JUDAS OF PROVIDENCE.

For five years Marius had lived in poverty, in privation, in distress even, but he perceived that he had never known real misery. Real misery he had just seen. It was this sprite which had just passed before his eyes. In fact, he who has seen the misery of man only has seen nothing, he must see the misery of woman; he who has seen the misery of woman only has seen nothing, he must see the misery of childhood.

When man has reached the last extremity, he comes, at the same time, to the last expedients. Woe to the defenceless beings who surround him! Work, wages, bread, fire, courage, willingness, all fail him at once. The light of day seems to die away without, the moral light dies out within; in this gloom, man meets the weakness of woman and of childhood, and puts them by force to ignominious uses.

Then all horrors are possible. Despair is surrounded by fragile walls which all open into vice or crime. Health, youth, honor, the holy and passionate delicacies of the still tender flesh, the heart, virginity, modesty, that epidermis of the soul, are fatally disposed of by that blind groping which seeks for aid, which meets degradation, and which accommodates itself to it. Fathers, mothers, children, brothers, sisters,

men, women, girls, cling together, and almost grow together like a mineral formation; in that dark promiscuity of sexes, of relationships, of ages, of infancy, of innocence. They crouch down, back to back, in a kind of fate-hovel. They glance at one another sorrowfully. Oh, the unfortunate! how pallid they are! how cold they are! It seems as though they were on a planet much further from the sun than we.

This young girl was to Marius a sort of messenger from the night. She revealed to him an entire and hideous aspect of the darkness.

Marius almost reproached himself with the fact that he had been so absorbed in his reveries and passion, that he had not until now cast a glance upon his neighbors. Paying their rent was a mechanical impulse; but he, Marius, should have done better. What! a mere wall separated him from these abandoned beings, who lived by groping in the night without the pale of the living; he came in contact with them, he was in some sort the last link of the human race which they touched, he heard them live or rather breathe beside him, and he took no notice of them! every day, at every moment, he heard them through the wall, walking, going, coming, talking, and he did not lend his ear! and in these words there were groans, and he did not even listen, his thoughts were elsewhere, upon dreams, upon impossible glimmerings, upon loves in the sky, upon infatuations; and all the while human beings, his brothers in Jesus Christ, his brothers in the people, were suffering beside him! agonizing uselessly! he even caused a portion of their suffering, and aggravated it. For had they another neighbor, a less chimerical and more observant neighbor, an ordinary and charitable man, it was clear that their poverty would have been noticed, their signals of distress would have been seen, and long ago perhaps they would have been gathered up and saved! Undoubtedly they seemed very depraved, very corrupt, very vile, very hateful, even, but those are rare who fall without becoming degraded; there is a point, moreover, at which the unfortunate and the infamous are associated and confounded in a single word, a fatal word, *Les Misérables*;—whose fault is it? And then, is it not when the fall is lowest that charity ought to be greatest?

While he thus preached to himself, for there were times when Marius, like all truly honest hearts, was his own monitor, and scolded himself more than he deserved; he looked at the wall which separated him from the Jondrettes, as if he could send his pitying glance through that partition to warm those unfortunate beings. The wall was a thin layer of plaster, upheld by laths and joists, through which, as we have just seen, voices and words could be distinguished perfectly. None but the dreamer, Marius, would not have perceived this before. There was no paper hung on this wall, either on the side of the Jondrettes, or on Marius's side; its coarse construction was bare to the eye. Almost unconsciously, Marius examined this partition; sometimes reverie examines, observes, and scrutinizes, as thought would do. Suddenly he arose; he noticed towards the top, near the ceiling, a triangular hole where three laths left a space between them. The plaster which should have stopped this hole was gone, and by getting upon the bureau he could see through that hole into the Jondrette's garret. Pity has and should have its curiosity. This hole was a kind of Judas. It is lawful to look upon

misfortune like a betrayer for the sake of relieving it. "Let us see what these people are," thought Marius, "and to what they are reduced." He climbed upon the bureau, put his eye to the crevice, and looked.

## VI.

### THE WILD MAN IN HIS LAIR.

Cities, like forests, have their dens in which hide all their vilest and most terrible monsters. But in cities, what hides thus is ferocious, unclean, and petty, that is to say, ugly; in forests, what hides is ferocious, savage, and grand, that is to say, beautiful. Den for den, those of beasts are preferable to those of men. Caverns are better than the wretched holes which shelter humanity.

What Marius saw was a hole. Marius was poor and his room was poorly furnished, but even as his poverty was noble, his garret was clean. The den into which his eyes were at that moment directed, was abject, filthy, fetid, infectious, gloomy, unclean. All the furniture was a straw chair, a rickety table, a few old broken dishes, and in two of the corners two indescribable pallets; all the light came from a dormer window of four panes, curtained with spiders' webs. Just enough light came through that loophole to make a man's face appear like the face of a phantom. The walls had a leprous look, and were covered with seams and scars like a face disfigured by some horrible malady; a putrid moisture oozed from them. Obscene pictures could be discovered upon them coarsely sketched in charcoal.

The room which Marius occupied had a broken brick pavement; this one was neither paved nor floored; the inmates walked immediately upon old plastering of the ruinous tenement, which had grown black under their feet. Upon this uneven soil where the dust was, as it were, incrustated, and which was virgin soil in respect only of the broom, were grouped at random constellations of socks, old shoes, and hideous rags; however, this room had a fireplace; so it rented for forty francs a year. In the fire place there was a little of everything, a chafing-dish, a kettle, some broken boards, rags hanging on nails, a bird-cage, some ashes, and even a little fire. Two embers were smoking sullenly.

The size of this garret added still more to its horror. It had projections, angles, black holes, recesses under the roof, bays, and promontories. Beyond were hideous, unfathomable corners, which seemed as if they must be full of spiders as big as one's fist, centipedes as large as one's foot, and perhaps even some unknown monsters of humanity.

One of the pallets was near the door, the other near the window. Each had one end next the chimney and both were opposite Marius. In a corner near the opening through which Marius was looking, hanging upon the wall in a black wooden frame, was a colored engraving at the bottom of which was written in large letters: **THE DREAM**. It represented a sleeping woman and a sleeping child, the child upon the woman's lap, an eagle in a cloud with a crown in his beak, and the woman putting away the crown from the child's head, but without waking; in



the back-ground Napoleon in a halo, leaning against a large blue column with a yellow capital adorned with this inscription :

MARINGO  
AUSTERLITS  
IENA  
WAGRAMME  
ELOI.

Below this frame a sort of wooden panel longer than it was wide was standing on the floor and leaning at an angle against the wall. It had the appearance of a picture set against the wall, of a frame probably daubed on the other side, of a pier glass taken down from a wall and forgotten to be hung again.

By the table, upon which Marius saw a pen, ink, and paper, was seated a man of about sixty, small, thin, livid, haggard, with a keen, cruel, and restless air; a hideous harpy.

Lavater, if he could have studied this face, would have found in it a mixture of vulture and pettifogger; the bird of prey and the man of tricks, rendering each other ugly and complete, the man of tricks making the bird of prey ignoble, the bird of prey making the man of tricks horrible.

This man had a long grey beard. He was dressed in a woman's chemise, which showed his shaggy breast and his naked arms bristling with grey hairs. Below this chemise, were a pair of muddy pantaloons and boots. He had a pipe in his mouth, and was smoking. There was no more bread in the den, but there was tobacco. He was writing, probably some such letter as those which Marius had read.

On one corner of the table was an old odd volume with a reddish cover, the size of which, the old duodecimo of series of books, betrayed that it was a novel.

As he wrote, the man talked aloud, and Marius heard his words: "To think that there is no equality even when we are dead! Look at Père Lachaise! The great, those who are rich, are in the upper part, in the avenue of the acacias, which is paved. The low, the poor, the unfortunate, they are put in the lower part, where there is mud up to the knees, in holes, in the wet. They are put there so that they may rot sooner! You cannot go to see them without sinking into the ground." Here he stopped, struck his fist on the table, and added, gnashing his teeth: "Oh! I could eat the world!"

A big woman, who might have been forty years old or a hundred, was squatting near the fireplace, upon her bare feet. She was dressed only in a chemise and a knit skirt patched with pieces of old cloth. A coarse tow apron covered half the skirt. Although this woman was bent and drawn up into herself, it could be seen that she was very tall. She was a kind of giantess by the side of her husband. She had hideous hair, light red sprinkled with grey, that she pushed back from time to time with her huge shining hands which had flat nails. Lying on the ground, at her side, wide open, was a volume of the same appearance as the other, and probably of the same novel.

Upon one of the pallets Marius could discern a sort of slender little

wan girl seated almost naked, with her feet hanging down, having the appearance neither of listening, nor of seeing, nor of living. The younger sister, doubtless, of the one who had come to his room. She appeared to be eleven or twelve years old. On examining her attentively, he saw that she must be fourteen. It was the child who, the evening before, on the Boulevard, said: "*I cavalé, cavalé, cavalé!*" She was of that sickly species which long remains backward, then pushes forward rapidly, and all at once. These sorry human plants are produced by want. These poor creatures have neither childhood nor youth. At fifteen they appear to be twelve; at sixteen they appear to be twenty. To-day a little girl, to-morrow a woman. One would say that they leap through life, to have done with it sooner. This being now had the appearance of a child.

Nothing, moreover, indicated the performance of any labor in this room, not a loom, not a wheel, not a tool. In one corner a few scraps of iron of an equivocal appearance. It was that gloomy idleness which follows despair, and which precedes the death agony.

Marius looked for some time into that funereal interior, more fearful than the interior of a tomb; for here were felt the movements of a human soul, and the palpitation of life. The garret, the cellar, the deep ditch, in which some of the wretched crawl at the bottom of the social edifice, are not the sepulchre itself; they are its antechamber; but like those rich men who display their greatest magnificence at the entrance of their palace, death, who is close at hand, seems to display his greatest wretchedness in this vestibule.

The man became silent, the woman did not speak, the girl did not seem to breathe. Marius could hear the pen scratching over the paper. The man muttered out, without ceasing to write: "Rabble! rabble! all is rabble!" This variation upon the ejaculation of Solomon drew a sigh from the woman. "My darling, be calm," said she. "Do not hurt yourself, dear. You are too good to write to all those people, my man."

In poverty bodies hug close to each other, as in the cold, but hearts grow distant. This woman, according to all appearance, must have loved this man with as much love as was in her; but probably, in the repeated mutual reproaches which grew out of the frightful distress that weighed upon them all, this love had become extinguished. She now felt towards her husband nothing more than the ashes of affection. Still the words of endearment, as often happens, had survived. She said to him: *Dear; my darling; my man*, etc., with her lips, her heart was silent. The man returned to his writing.

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## VII.

### STRATEGY AND TACTICS.

Marius, with a heavy heart, was about to get down from the sort of observatory which he had extemporised, when a sound attracted his attention and induced him to remain in his place.

The door of the garret was hastily opened. The eldest daughter ap-

peared upon the threshold. On her feet she had coarse men's shoes, covered with mud, which had been spattered as high as her red ankles, and she was wrapped in a ragged old gown which Marius had not seen upon her an hour before, but which she had probably left at his door that she might inspire the more pity, and which she must have put on upon going out. She came in, pushed the door to behind her, stopped to take breath, for she was quite breathless, then cried with an expression of joy and triumph: "He is coming!"

The father turned his eyes, the woman turned her head, the younger sister did not stir. "Who?" asked the father. "The gentleman!" "The philanthropist?" "Yes." "That old man?" "Yes." "He is going to come?" "He is behind me." "You are sure." "I am sure." "There, true, he is coming?" "He is coming in a fiacre." "In a fiacre? It is Rothschild." The father arose. "How are you sure? if he is coming in a fiacre, how is it that you get here before him? you gave him the address, at least? you told him the last door at the end of the hall on the right? provided he does not make a mistake? you found him at the church then? did he read my letter? what did he say to you?" "Tut, tut, tut!" said the girl, "how you run on, good-man! I'll tell you. I went into the church, he was at his usual place, I made a courtesy to him, and I gave him the letter, he read it and said to me: 'Where do you live, my child?' I said: 'Monsieur, I will show you.' He said to me: 'No, give me your address; my daughter has some purchases to make, I am going to take a carriage, and I will get to your house as soon as you do.' I gave him the address. When I told him the house, he appeared surprised and hesitated an instant, then he said: 'It is all the same, I will go.' When Mass was over, I saw him leave the church with his daughter. I saw them get into a fiacre. And I told him plainly the last door at the end of the hall on the right." "And how do you know that he will come?" "I just saw the fiacre coming into the Rue du Petit Banquier. That is what made me run." "How do you know it is the same fiacre?" "Because I had noticed the number." "What is the number?" "Four hundred and forty." "Good, you are a clever girl."

The girl looked resolutely at her father, and showing the shoes which she had on, said: "A clever girl, that may be, but I tell you that I shall never put on these shoes again, and that I will not do it, for health first, and then for decency's sake. I know nothing more provoking than soles that squeak and go ghee, ghee, ghee, all along the street. I would rather go barefoot."

"You are right," answered the father in a mild tone which contrasted with the rudeness of the young girl, "but they would not let you go into the churches; the poor must have shoes. People do not go to God's house bare-footed," added he bitterly. Then returning to the subject which occupied his thoughts, "And you are sure, then, sure that he is coming?" "He is at my heels," said she. The man sprang up. There was a sort of illumination on his face. "Wife?" cried he, "you hear. Here is the philanthropist. Put out the fire."

The astounded woman did not stir. The father, with the agility of a mountebank, caught a broken pot which stood on the mantel, and threw some water upon the embers. Then turning to his eldest daughter:

"You! unbottom the chair!" His daughter did not understand him at all. He seized the chair, and with a kick he ruined the seat. His leg went through it. As he drew out his leg, he asked his daughter: "Is it cold?" "Very cold. It snows." The father turned towards the younger girl, who was on the pallet near the window, and cried in a thundering voice: "Quick! off the bed, good-for-nothing! will you never do anything? break a pane of glass!" The little girl sprang off the bed trembling. "Break a pane of glass!" said he again. The child was speechless. "Do you hear me?" repeated the father, "I tell you to break a pane!" The child, with a sort of terrified obedience, rose upon tiptoe, and struck her fist into a pane. The glass broke and fell with a crash. "Good," said the father.

He was serious, yet rapid. His eye ran hastily over all the nooks and corners of the garret. You would have said he was a general, making his final preparations at the moment when the battle was about to begin.

The mother, who had not yet said a word, got up and asked in a slow, muffled tone, her words seeming to come out as if eurdled: "Dear, what is it you want to do?" "Get into bed," answered the man.

His tone admitted of no deliberation. The mother obeyed, and threw herself heavily upon one of the pallets. Meanwhile a sob was heard in a corner.

"What is that?" cried the father. The younger daughter, without coming out of the darkness into which she had shrunk, showed her bleeding fist. In breaking the glass she had cut herself; she had gone to her mother's bed, and she was weeping in silence. It was the mother's turn to rise and cry out. "You see now! what stupid things you are doing! breaking your glass, she has cut herself!" "So much the better!" said the man. "I knew she would." "How! so much the better?" resumed the woman. "Silence!" replied the father; "I suppress the liberty of the press."

Then tearing the chemise which he had on, he made a bandage with which he hastily wrapped up the little girl's bleeding wrist. That done, his eye fell upon the torn chemise with satisfaction. "And the chemise too," said he, "all this has a good appearance."

An icy wind whistled at the window and came into the room. The mist from without entered and spread about like a whitish wadding picked apart by invisible fingers. Through the broken pane the falling snow was seen. The cold promised the day before by the Candlemas sun had come indeed.

The father cast a glance about him as if to assure himself that he had forgotten nothing. He took an old shovel and spread ashes over the moistened embers in such a way as to hide them completely. Then rising and standing with his back to the chimney: "Now," said he, "we can receive the philanthropist."

## VIII.

## THE SUNBEAM IN THE HOLE.

The large girl went to her father and laid her hand on his. "Feel how cold I am," said she. "Pshaw!" answered the father, "I am a good deal colder than that." The mother cried impetuously: "You always have everything better than the rest, even pain." "Down!" said the man.

The mother, after a peculiar look from the man, held her peace.

There was a moment of silence in the den. The eldest daughter was scraping the mud off the bottom of her dress with a careless air, the young sister continued to sob; the mother had taken her head in both hands and was covering her with kisses, saying to her in a low tone: "My treasure, I beg of you, it will be nothing, do not cry, you will make your father angry." "No!" cried the father, "on the contrary! sob! sob! that does finely." Then turning to the eldest: "Ah! but he does not come! if he is not coming, I shall have put out my fire, knocked the bottom out of my chair, torn my chemise, and broken my window for nothing." "And cut the little girl!" murmured the mother. "Do you know," resumed the father, "that it is as cold as ice in this garret? If this man should not come! Oh! that is it! he makes us wait for him! he says: Well! they will wait for me! that is what they are for! Oh! how I hate them, and how I would strangle them with joy and rejoicing, enthusiasm and satisfaction, these rich men! all the rich! these professed charitable men, who make plums, who go to mass, who follow the priesthood, preachy, preachy, who give in to the cows, and who think themselves above us, and who come to humiliate us, and to bring us clothes! as they call them! rags which are not worth four sous, and bread! that is not what I want of the rabble! I want money! But money, never! because they say that we would go and drink it, and that we are drunkards and do-nothings! And what then are they, and what have they been in their time? Thieves! they would not have got rich without that! Oh! somebody ought to take society by the four corners of the sheet and toss it all into the air! Everything would be crushed, it is likely, but at least nobody would have anything, there would be so much gained! But what now is he doing, your mug of a benevolent gentleman? is he coming? The brute may have forgotten the address! I will bet that the old fool——"

Just then there was a light rap at the door, the man rushed forward and opened it, exclaiming with many low bows and smiles of adoration: "Come in, Monsieur! deign to come in, my noble benefactor, as well as your charming young lady."

A man of mature age and a young girl appeared at the door of the garret.

Marius had not left his place. What he felt at that moment escapes human language. It was She.

Whoever has loved, knows all the radiant meaning contained in the three letters of this word: She.

It was indeed she. Marius could hardly discern her through the luminous vapor which suddenly spread over his eyes. It was that sweet

absent being, that star which had been his light for six months; it was that eye, that brow, that mouth, that beautiful vanished face which had produced night when it went away. The vision had been in an eclipse, it was re appearing.

She appeared again in this gloom, in this garret, in this shapeless den, in this horror! Marius shuddered desperately. What! it was she! the beating of his heart disturbed his sight. He felt ready to melt into tears. What! at last he saw her again after having sought for her so long! It seemed to him that he had lost his soul and that he had just found it again.

She was still the same, a little paler only; her delicate face was set in a violet velvet hat, her form was hidden under a black satin pelisse, below her long dress he caught a glimpse of her little foot squeezed into a silk buskin. She was still accompanied by Monsieur Leblanc.

She stepped into the room and laid a large package on the table. The elder Jondrette girl had retreated behind the door, and was looking upon that velvet hat, that silk dress, and that charming happy face, with an evil eye.

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## IX.

### JONDRETTE WEEPS ALMOST.

The den was so dark that people who came from out-doors felt as if they were entering a cellar on coming in. The two new comers stepped forward, therefore, with some hesitation, hardly discerning the dim forms about them, while they were seen and examined with ease by the tenants of the garret, whose eyes were accustomed to this twilight.

Monsieur Leblanc approached with his kind and compassionate look, and said to the father: "Monsieur, you will find in this package some new clothes, some stockings, and some new coverlids." "Our angelic benefactor overwhelms us," said Jondrette, bowing down to the floor. Then, stooping to his eldest daughter's ear, while the two visitors were examining this lamentable abode, he added rapidly in a whisper: "Well! what did I tell you? rags? no money. They are all alike! Tell me, how was the letter to this old blubber-lip signed?" "Fabantou," answered the daughter. "The dramatic artist, good!"

This was lucky for Jondrette, for at that very moment Monsieur Leblanc turned towards him and said to him, with the appearance of one who is trying to recollect a name: "I see that you are indeed to be pitied, Monsieur—, "Fabantou," said Jondrette quickly. "Monsieur Fabantou, yes, that is it. I remember." "Dramatic artist, Monsieur, and who has had his successes." Here Jondrette evidently thought the moment come to make an impression upon the "philanthropist." He exclaimed in a tone of voice which belongs to the braggadocio of the juggler at a fair, and, at the same time, to the humility of a beggar on the highway: "Pupil of Talma, Monsieur! I am a pupil of Talma! Fortune once smiled on me. Alas! now it is the turn of misfortune. Look, my benefactor, no bread, no fire. My poor darlings have no fire! My only chair unseated! A broken window! in such weather as is this!

My spouse in bed! sick!" "Poor woman!" said Monsieur Leblanc. "My child injured!" added Jondrette.

The child, whose attention had been diverted by the arrival of the strangers, was staring at "the young lady," and had ceased her sobbing. "Why don't you cry? why don't you scream?" said Jondrette to her in a whisper. At the same time he pinched her injured hand. All this with the skill of a juggler. The little one uttered loud cries. The adorable young girl whom Marius in his heart called "his Ursula" went quickly to her: "Poor dear child!" said she. "Look, my beautiful young lady," pursued Jondrette, "her bleeding wrist! It is an accident which happened in working at a machine by which she earned six sous a day. It may be necessary to cut off her arm." "Indeed!" said the old gentleman alarmed. The little girl, taking this seriously, began to sob again beautifully. "Alas, yes, my benefactor!" answered the father.

For some moments, Jondrette had been looking at "the philanthropist" in a strange manner. Even while speaking, he seemed to scrutinize him closely as if he were trying to recall some reminiscence. Suddenly, taking advantage of a moment when the new comers were anxiously questioning the smaller girl about her mutilated hand, he passed over to his wife who was lying in her bed, appearing to be overwhelmed and stupid, and said to her quickly and in a very low tone: "Notice that man!" Then turning towards M. Leblanc, and continuing his lamentation: "You see, Monsieur! my whole dress is nothing but a chemise of my wife's! and that all torn! in the heart of winter. I cannot go out, for lack of a coat. If I had a coat, I should go to see Mademoiselle Mars, who knows me, and of whom I am a great favorite. She is still living in the Rue de la Tour des Dames, is not she? You know, Monsieur, we have played together in the provinces. I shared her laurels. Celimène would come to my relief, Monsieur! Elmira would give alms to Belisarius! But no, nothing! And not a sou in the house! My wife sick, not a sou! My daughter dangerously injured, not a sou! My spouse has choking fits. It is her time of life, and then the nervous system has something to do with it. She needs aid, and my daughter also! But the doctor! but the druggist! how can I pay them! not a penny! I would fall on my knees before a penny, Monsieur! You see how the arts are fallen! And do you know, my charming young lady, and you, my generous patron, do you know, you who breathe virtue and goodness, and who perfume that church where my daughter, in going to say her prayers, sees you every day? For I bring up my daughters religiously, Monsieur. I have not allowed them to take to the theatre. Ah! the rogues! that I should see them tripping! I do not jest! I fortify them with sermons about honor, about morals, about virtue! Ask them! They must walk straight. They have a father. I mean to educate them virtuously, and that they may be honest, and that they may be genteel, and that they may believe in God's sacred name! Well, Monsieur, my worthy Monsieur, do you know what is going to happen to-morrow? To-morrow is the 4th of February, the fatal day, the last delay that my landlord will give me; if I do not pay him this evening, to-morrow my eldest daughter, myself, my spouse with her fever, my child with her wound, we shall all four be

turned out of doors, and driven off into the street, upon the boulevard, without shelter, into the rain, upon the snow. You see, Monsieur, I owe four quarters, a year! that is sixty francs."

Jondrette lied. Four quarters would have made but forty francs, and he could not have owed for four, since it was not six months since Marius had paid for two.

M. Leblanc took five francs from his pocket and threw them on the table. Jondrette had time to mutter into the ear of his elder daughter: "The whelp! what does he think I am going to do with his five francs? That will not pay for my chair and my window! I must make my expenses!"

Meantime, M. Leblanc had taken off a large brown overcoat, which he wore over his blue surtout, and hung it over the back of the chair. "Monsieur Fabantou," said he, "I have only these five francs with me; but I am going to take my daughter home, and I will return this evening; is it not this evening that you have to pay?"

Jondrette's face lighted up with a strange expression. He answered quickly: "Yes, my noble Monsieur. At eight o'clock, I must be at my landlord's." "I will be here at six o'clock, and I will bring you the sixty francs." "My benefactor!" cried Jondrette distractedly. And he added in an under tone: "Take a good look at him, wife!" M. Leblanc took the arm of the beautiful young girl, and turned towards the door: "Till this evening, my friends," said he. "Six o'clock," said Jondrette. "Six o'clock precisely."

Just then the overcoat on the chair caught the eye of the eldest daughter. "Monsieur," said she, "you forget your coat." Jondrette threw a crushing glance at his daughter, accompanied by a terrible shrug of the shoulders. M. Leblanc turned and answered with a smile: "I do not forget it, I leave it." "O, my patrou," said Jondrette, "my noble benefactor, I am melting into tears! Allow me to conduct you to your carriage." "If you go out," replied M. Leblanc, "put on this overcoat. It is really very cold." Jondrette did not make him say it twice. He put on the brown overcoat very quickly. And they went out all three, Jondrette preceding the two strangers.

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## X.

### PRICE OF PUBLIC CABRIOLETS: THREE FRANCS AN HOUR.

Marius had lost nothing of all this scene, and yet in reality he had seen nothing of it. His eyes had remained fixed upon the young girl, his heart had, so to speak, seized upon her and enveloped her entirely, from her first step into the garret. During the whole time she had been there, he had lived that life of ecstasy which suspends material perceptions and precipitates the whole soul upon a single point. He contemplated, not that girl, but that light in a satin pelisse and a velvet hat. Had the star Sirius entered the room he would not have been more dazzled.

While the young girl was opening the bundle, unfolding the clothes and the coverlids, questioning the sick mother kindly and the little



injured girl tenderly, he watched all her motions, he endeavored to hear her words. He knew her eyes, her forehead, her beauty, her stature, her gait, he did not know the sound of her voice. He thought he had caught a few words of it once at the Luxembourg, but he was not absolutely sure. He would have given ten years of his life to hear it, to be able to carry a little of that music in his soul. But all was lost in the wretched displays and trumpet blasts of Jondrette. This added a real anger to the transport of Marius. He brooded her with his eyes. He could not imagine that it really was that divine creature which he saw in the midst of the misshapen beings of this monstrous den. He seemed to see a humming-bird among toads.

When he went out, he had but one thought, to follow her, not to give up her track, not to leave her without knowing where she lived, not to lose her again, at least, after having so miraculously found her! He leaped down from the bureau and took his hat. As he was putting his hand on the bolt, and was just going out, he reflected and stopped. The hall was long, the stairs steep, Jondrette a great talker, M. Leblanc doubtless had not yet got into his carriage; if he should turn round in the passage, or on the stairs, or on the door step, and perceive him, Marius, in that house, he would certainly be alarmed and would find means to escape him anew, and it would be all over at once. What was to be done? wait a little? but during the delay the carriage might go. Marius was perplexed. At last he took the risk and went out of his room.

There was nobody in the hall. He ran to the stairs. There was nobody on the stairs. He hurried down, and reached the boulevard in time to see a fiacre turn the corner of the Rue du Petit Banquier and return into the city.

Marius rushed in that direction. When he reached the corner of the boulevard, he saw the fiacre again going rapidly down the Rue Mouffetard; the fiacre was already at a long distance, there was no means of reaching it; what should he do? run after it? impossible; and then from the carriage they would certainly notice a man running at full speed in pursuit of them, and the father would recognize him. Just at this moment, marvellous and unheard-of good fortune, Marius saw a public cab passing along the boulevard, empty. There was but one course to take, to get into this cab, and follow the fiacre. That was sure, effectual, and without danger. Marius made a sign to the driver to stop, and cried to him: "Right away!" Marius had no cravat, he had on his old working coat, some of the buttons of which were missing, and his shirt was torn in one of the plaits of the bosom. The driver stopped, winked, and reached his left hand towards Marius, rubbing his forefinger gently with his thumb. "What?" said Marius. "Pay in advance," said the driver. Marius remembered that he had only sixteen sous with him. "How much?" he asked. "Forty sous." "I will pay when I get back."

The driver made no reply, but to whistle an air from La Palisse and whip up his horse.

Marius saw the cab move away with a bewildered air. For want of twenty-four sous he was losing his joy, his happiness, his love! he was falling back into night! he had seen, and he was again becoming blind.

He thought bitterly, and it must indeed be said, with deep regret, of the five francs he had given that very morning to that miserable girl. Had he had those five francs he would have been saved, he would have been born again, he would have come out of limbo and darkness, he would have come out of his isolation, his spleen, his bereavement; he would have again knotted the black thread of his destiny with that beautiful golden thread which had just floated before his eyes and broken off once more! He returned to the old tenement in despair. He might have thought that M. Leblanc had promised to return in the evening, and that he had only to take better care to follow him then; but in his rapt contemplation, he had hardly understood it.

Just as he went up the stairs, he noticed on the other side of the boulevard, beside the deserted wall of the Rue de la Barrière des Gobelins, Jondrette in the "philanthropist's" overcoat, talking to one of those men of dangerous appearance, who, by common consent, are called *prowlers of the barrières*; men of equivocal faces, suspicious speech, who have an appearance of evil intentions, and who usually sleep by day, which leads us to suppose that they work by night.

These two men quietly talking while the snow was whirling around them in its fall made a picture which a policeman certainly would have observed, but which Marius hardly noticed. Nevertheless, however mournful was the subject of his reflections, he could not help saying to himself that this prowler of the barrières with whom Jondrette was talking, resembled a certain Panchaud, alias Printanier, alias Bigrenaille, whom Courfeyrac had once pointed out to him, and who passed in the quartier for a very dangerous night wanderer. We have seen this man's name in the preceding book. This Panchaud, alias Printanier, alias Bigrenaille, figured afterwards in several criminal trials, and has since become a celebrated scoundrel. He was still at that time only a notorious scoundrel. He is now a matter of tradition among bandits and assassins. He was the head of a school near the close of the last reign. And in the evening, at nightfall, at the hour when crowds gather and speak low, he was talked about at La Force in La Fosse aux Lions. You might even, in that prison, just at the spot where that sewer which served for the astonishing escape of thirty prisoners in broad day in 1843, passes under the encircling passage-way; you might, above the flagging of that sewer, read his name, PANCHAUD, audaciously cut by himself upon the outer wall in one of his attempts to escape. In 1832, the police already had him under their eye, but he had not yet really made his debut.

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## VI.

### OFFERS OF SERVICE BY MISERY TO GRIEF

Marius mounted the stairs of the old tenement with slow steps; just as he was going into his cell, he perceived in the hall behind him the elder Jondrette girl, who was following him. The girl was odious to his sight; it was she who had his five francs, it was too late to ask her for them, the cab was there no longer, the fiacre was far away. Moreover

she would not give them back to him. As to questioning her about the address of the people who had just come, that was useless; it was plain that she did not know, since the letter signed Fabantou was addressed to the *beneficent gentleman of the Church Saint Jacques du Haut Pas*.

Marius went into his room and pushed his door behind him. It did not close; he turned and saw a hand holding the door partly open. "What is it?" he asked, "who is there?" It was the Jondrette girl. "Is it you?" said Marius almost harshly, "you again? What do you want of me?"

She seemed thoughtful and did not look at him. She had lost the assurance which she had in the morning. She did not come in, but stopped in the dusky hall, where Marius perceived her through the half-open door. "Come now, will you answer?" said Marius. "What is it you want of me?" She raised her mournful eyes, in which a sort of confused light seemed to shine dimly, and said to him: "Monsieur Marius, you look sad. What is the matter with you?" "With me?" "Yes, you." "There is nothing the matter with me." "Yes!" "No." "I tell you there is!" "Let me be quiet!" Marius pushed the door anew, she still held it back. "Stop," said she, "you are wrong. Though you may not be rich, you were good this morning. Be so again now. You gave me something to eat, tell me now what ails you. You are troubled at something, that is plain. I do not want you to be troubled. What must be done for that? Can I serve you in anything? Let me. I do not ask your secrets, you need not tell them to me, but yet I may be useful. I can certainly help you, since I help my father. When it is necessary to carry letters, go into houses, inquire from door to door, find out an address, follow somebody, I do it. Now, you can certainly tell me what is the matter with you, I will go and speak to the persons; sometimes for somebody to speak to the persons is enough to understand things, and it is all arranged. Make use of me."

An idea came into Marius' mind. What straw do we despise when we feel that we are sinking? He approached the girl. "Listen," said he to her, kindly. She interrupted him with a flash of joy in her eyes. "Oh! yes, talk softly to me! I like that better." "Well," resumed he, "you brought this old gentleman here with his daughter." "Yes." "Do you know their address?" "No." "Find it for me." The girl's eyes, which had been gloomy, had become joyful; they now became dark.

"Is that what you want?" she asked. "Yes." "Do you know them?" "No." "That is to say," said she hastily, "you do not know her, but you want to know her." This *them* which had become *her* had an indescribable significance and bitterness. "Well, can you do it?" said Marius. "You shall have the beautiful young lady's address."

There was again, in these words, "the beautiful young lady," an expression which made Marius uneasy. He continued: "Well, no matter! the address of the father and daughter. Their address, yes!" She looked steadily at him. "What will you give me?" "Anything you wish!" "Anything I wish?" "Yes." "You shall have the address." She looked down, and then with a hasty movement closed the door. Marius was alone.

He dropped into a chair, with his head and both elbows on the bed, swallowed up in thoughts which he could not grasp, and as if he were in a fit of *vertigo*. All that had taken place since morning, the appearance of the angel, her disappearance, what this poor creature had just said to him, a gleam of hope floating in an ocean of despair,—all this was confusedly crowding his brain. Suddenly he was violently awakened from his reverie.

He heard the loud, harsh voice of Jondrette pronounce these words, for him, full of the strangest interest: "I tell you that I am sure of it, and that I recognized him!" Of whom was Jondrette talking? he had recognized whom? M. Leblanc? the father of "his Ursula?" What! did Jondrette know him? was Marius just about to get in this sudden and unexpected way all the information the lack of which made his life obscure to himself? was he at last to know whom he loved, who this young girl was? who her father was? was the thick shadow which enveloped them to be rolled away? was the veil to be rent? Oh! heavens!

He sprang, rather than mounted, upon the bureau, and resumed his place near the little aperture in the partition. He again saw the interior of the Jondrette den.

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## XII.

### USE OF M. LEBLANC'S FIVE FRANC PIECE.

Nothing had changed in the appearance of the family, except that the wife and daughters had opened the package, and put on the woollen stockings and underclothes. Two new coverlids were thrown over the two beds. Jondrette had evidently just come in. He had not yet recovered his regular breathing. His daughters were sitting on the floor near the fireplace, the elder binding up the hand of the younger. His wife lay as if exhausted upon the pallet near the fireplace, with an astonished countenance. Jondrette was walking up and down the garret with rapid strides. His eyes had an extraordinary look.

The woman, who seemed timid and stricken with stupor before her husband, ventured to say to him: "What, really? you are sure?" "Sure! It was eight years ago! but I recognise him! Ah! I recognise him! I recognised him immediately. What! it did not strike you?" "No." "And yet I told you to pay attention. But it is the same height, the same face, hardly any older; there are some men who do not grow old; I don't know how they do it; it is the same tone of voice. He is better dressed, that is all! Ah! mysterious old devil, I have got you, all right!"

He checked himself, and said to his daughters: "You go out! It is queer that it did not strike your eye." They got up to obey. The mother stammered out: "With her sore hand?" "The air will do her good," said Jondrette. Go along." It was clear that this man was one of those to whom there is no reply. The two girls went out.

Just as they were passing the door, the father caught the elder by the arm, and said with a peculiar tone: "You will be here at five o'clock

precisely. Both of you. I shall need you." Marius redoubled his attention.

Alone with his wife, Jondrette began to walk the room again, and took two or three turns in his silence. Then he spent a few minutes in tucking the bottom of the woman's chemise which he wore into the waist of his trousers. Suddenly he turned towards the woman, folded his arms, and exclaimed: "And do you want I should tell you one thing? the young lady—" "Well, what?" said the woman, "the young lady?" Marius could doubt no longer, it was indeed of her that they were talking. He listened with an intense anxiety. His whole life was concentrated in his ears.

But Jondrette stooped down, and whispered to his wife. Then he straightened up and finished aloud: "It is she!" "That girl?" said the wife. "That girl!" said the husband. No words could express what there was in the *that girl* of the mother. It was surprise, rage, hatred, anger, mingled and combined in a monstrous intonation. The few words that had been spoken, some name, doubtless, which her husband had whispered in her ear, had been enough to rouse this huge drowsy woman and to change her repulsiveness to hideousness. "Impossible!" she exclaimed, "when I think that my daughters go bare-foot and have not a dress to put on! What! a satin pelisse, a velvet hat, buskins, and all! more than two hundred francs worth! one would think she was a lady! no, you are mistaken! why, in the first place she was horrid, this one is not bad! she is really not bad! it cannot be she!" "I tell you it is she. You will see."

At this absolute affirmation, the woman raised her big red and blond face and looked at the ceiling with a hideous expression. At that moment she appeared to Marius still more terrible than her husband. She was a swine with the look of a tigress. "What!" she resumed, "this horrible beautiful young lady who looked at my girls with an appearance of pity, can she be that beggar! Oh, I would like to stamp her heart out!" She sprang off the bed, and remained a moment standing, her hair flying, her nostrils distended, her mouth half open, her fists clenched and drawn back. Then she fell back upon the pallet. The man still walked back and forth, paying no attention to his female.

After a few moments of silence, he approached her and stopped before her, with folded arms, as before. "And do you want I should tell you one thing?" "What?" she asked. He answered in a quick and low voice: "My fortune is made." The woman stared at him with that look which means: Has the man who is talking to me gone crazy? He continued: "Thunder! it is a good long time now that I have been a parishoner of the die-of-hunger-if-you-have-any-fire,-and-die-of-cold-if-you-have-any-bread parish! I have had misery enough! my yoke and the yoke of other people! I jest no longer, I find it comic no longer, enough of puns, good God! I want food for my hunger, I want drink for my thirst! to stuff! to sleep! to do nothing! I want to have my turn, I do! before I burst! I want to be a bit of a millionaire!" He took a turn about the garret and added: "Like other people." "What do you mean?" asked the woman. He shook his head, winked and lifted his voice like a street doctor about to make a

demonstration: "What do I mean? listen!" "Hist!" muttered the woman, "not so loud! if it means business, nobody must hear."

"Pshaw! who is there to hear? our neighbor? I saw him go out just now. Besides, does he hear, the great stupid? and then I tell you that I saw him go out."

Nevertheless, by a sort of instinct, Jondrette lowered his voice, not enough, however, for his words to escape Marius. A favorable circumstance, and one which enabled Marius to lose nothing of this conversation, was that the fallen snow deafened the sound of the carriages on the boulevard. Marius heard this: "Listen attentively. He is caught, the Croesus! it is all right. It is already done. Everything is arranged. I have seen the men. He will come this evening at six o'clock. To bring his sixty francs, the rascal! did you see how I got that out, my sixty francs, my landlord, my 4th of February! it is not even a quarter! was that stupid! He will come then at six o'clock! our neighbor is gone to dinner then. Mother Bougon is washing dishes in the city. There is nobody in the house. Our neighbor never comes back before eleven o'clock. The girls will stand watch. You shall help us. He will be his own executor." "And if he should not be his own executor," asked the wife. Jondrette made a sinister gesture and said: "We will execute him." And he burst into a laugh.

It was the first time that Marius had seen him laugh. This laugh was cold and feeble, and made him shudder.

Jondrette opened a closet near the chimney, took out an old cap and put it on his head after brushing it with his sleeve. "Now," said he, "I am going out. I have still some men to see. Some good ones. You will see how it is going to work. I shall be back as soon as possible, it is a great hand to play, look out for the house."

And with his two fists in the two pockets of his trowsers, he stood a moment in thought, then exclaimed: "Do you know that it is very lucky indeed that he did not recognise me? If he had been the one to recognise me he would not have come back. He would escape us! It is my beard that saved me! my romantic beard! my pretty little romantic beard!"

He went to the window. The snow was still falling, and blotted out the grey sky. "What villanous weather!" said he. Then folding his coat: "The skin is too large. It is all the same," added he, "he did devilish well to leave it for me, the old scoundrel! Without this I should not have been able to go out and the whole thing would have been spoiled. But on what do things hang." And pulling his cap over his eyes, he went out.

Hardly had he had time to take a few steps in the hall, when the door opened and his tawny and cunning face again appeared. "I forgot," said he. "You will have a charcoal fire." And he threw into his wife's apron the five franc piece which the "philanthropist" had left him. "A charcoal fire" asked the woman. "Yes." "How many bushels?" "Two good ones." That will be thirty sous. With the rest, I will buy something for dinner." The devil, no." "Why?" "The piece of a hundred sous is not to be spent." "Why?" "Because I have something to buy." "What?" "Something." "How much will you need?" "Where is there a tool store near here?"

"Rue Mouffetard." "Oh! yes, at the corner of some street; I see the shop." "But tell me now how much you will need for what you have to buy?" "Fifty sous or three francs." "There won't be much left for dinner." "Don't bother about eating to-day. There is better business." "That is enough, my jewel."

At this word from his wife, Jondrette closed the door, and Marius heard his steps recede along the hall and go rapidly down the stairs.

Just then the clock of Saint Medard struck one.

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### XIII.

SOLUS CUM SOLO, IN LOCO REMOTO, NON COGITABANTUR ORARE  
PATER NOSTER.

Marius, all dreamer as he was, was, as we have said, of a firm and energetic nature. His habits of solitary meditation, while developing sympathy and compassion in him, had perhaps diminished his liability to become irritated, but left intact the faculty of indignation; he had the benevolence of a Brahmin and the severity of a Judge; he would have pitied a toad, but he would have crushed a viper. Now, it was into a viper's hole that he had just been looking; it was a nest of monsters that he had before his eyes.

"I must put my foot on these wretches," said he.

None of the enigmas which he hoped to see unriddled were yet cleared up; on the contrary, all had perhaps become still darker; he knew nothing more of the beautiful child of the Luxembourg or of the man whom he called M. Leblanc, except that Jondrette knew them. Across the dark words which had been uttered, he saw distinctly but one thing; that an ambushade was preparing, an ambushade obscure, but terrible; that they were both running a great risk, she probably, her father certainly; that he must foil the hideous combinations of the Jondrettes and break the web of these spiders.

He looked for a moment at the female Jondrette. She had pulled an old sheet-iron furnace out of a corner and she was fumbling among the old iron. He got down from the bureau as quietly as he could, taking care to make no noise. In the midst of his dread at what was in preparation, and the horror with which the Jondrettes had inspired him, he felt a sort of joy at the idea that it would perhaps be given to him to render so great a service to her whom he loved. But what was he to do? warn the persons threatened? where should he find them? He did not know their address. They had re-appeared to his eyes for an instant, then they had again plunged into the boundless depths of Paris. Wait at the door for M. Leblanc at six o'clock in the evening, the time when he would arrive, and warn him of the plot? But Jondrette and his men would see him watching, the place was solitary, they would be stronger than he, they would find means to seize him or get him out of the way, and he whom Marius wished to save would be lost. One o'clock had just struck, the ambushade was to be carried out at six. Marius had five hours before him.

There was but one thing to be done. He put on his presentable coat,

tied a cravat about his neck, took his hat, and went out, without making any more noise than if he had been walking barefooted upon moss. Besides the Jondrette woman was still fumbling over the old iron. Once out of the house, he went to the Rue du Petit Banquier. He was about midway of that street near a very low wall which he could have stepped over in some places and which bordered a broad field, he was walking slowly, absorbed in his thoughts as he was, and the snow deafened his steps; all at once he heard voices talking very near him. He turned his head, the street was empty, there was nobody in it, it was broad daylight, and yet he heard voices distinctly.

It occurred to him to look over this wall. There were in fact two men there with their backs to the wall, seated in the snow, and talking in a low tone. These two forms were unknown to him, one was a bearded man in a blouse, and the other a long-haired man in tatters. The bearded man had on a Greek cap, the other was bare-headed, and there was snow in his hair. By bending his head over above them Marius could hear.

The long haired one jogged the other with his elbow, and said: "With Patron-Minette, it can't fail." "Do you think so?" said the bearded one; and the long-haired one replied: "It will be a *fajiot* of five hundred *balles* for each of us, and the worst that can happen: five years, six years, ten years at most!"

The other answered hesitatingly, shivering under his Greek cap: "Yes, it is a real thing. We can't go against such things." "I tell you that the affair can't fail," replied the long haired one. "Father What's-his name's *maringotte* will be harnessed." Then they began to talk about a melodrama which they had seen the evening before at La Gaité. Marius went on his way.

It seemed to him that the obscure words of these men, so strangely hidden behind that wall, and crouching down in the snow, were not perhaps without some connexion with Jondrette's terrible projects. That must be *the affair*.

He went towards the Faubourg Saint Marceau, and asked at the first shop in his way where he could find a commissary of police. Number 14, Rue de Pontoise was pointed out to him. Marius went thither. Passing a baker's shop, he bought a two sou loaf and ate it, foreseeing that he would have no dinner. On his way he rendered to Providence its due. He thought that if he had not given his five francs to the Jondrette girl in the morning, he would have followed M. Leblanc's fiacre, and consequently known nothing of this, so that there would have been no obstacle to the ambuscade of the Jondrettes, and M. Leblanc would have been lost, and doubtless his daughter with him.

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#### XIV

IN WHICH A POLICE OFFICER GIVES A LAWYER TWO FISTICUFFS.

On reaching Number 14, Rue de Pontoise, he went up stairs and asked for the commissary of police. "The commissary of police is not in," said one of the office boys; "but there is an inspector who answers for him. Would you like to speak to him? is it urgent?"



"Yes," said Marius. The office boy introduced him into the commissary's private room. A man of tall stature was standing there behind a railing, in front of a stove, and holding up with both hands the flaps of a huge overcoat with three capes. He had a square face, a thin and firm mouth, very fierce, bushy, greyish whiskers, and an eye that would turn your pockets inside out. You might have said of this eye, not that it penetrated, but that it ransacked.

This man's appearance was not much less ferocious or formidable than Jondrette's; it is sometimes no less startling to meet the dog than the wolf. "What do you wish?" said he to Marius, without adding Monsieur. "The commissary of police." "He is absent. I answer for him." "It is a very secret affair." "Speak, then." "And very urgent." "Then speak quickly." This man, calm and abrupt, was at the same time alarming and reassuring. He inspired fear and confidence. Marius related his adventure. That a person whom he only knew by sight was to be drawn into an ambushade that very evening; that occupying the room next the place he, Marius Pontmercy, attorney, had heard the whole plot through the partition; that the scoundrel who had contrived the plot was named Jondrette; that he had accomplices, probably prowlers of the barrières, among others a certain Panchaud, alias Printanier, alias Bigrenaille; that Jondrette's daughters would stand watch; that there was no means of warning the threatened man, as not even his name was known; and finally, that all this was to be done at six o'clock that evening, at the most desolate spot on the Boulevard de l'Hôpital, in the house numbered 50-52.

At that number the inspector raised his head, and said coolly: "It is then the room at the end of the hall?" "Exactly," said Marius, and he added, "Do you know that house?" The inspector remained silent a moment, then answered, warming the heel of his boot at the door of the stove: "It seems so." He continued between his teeth, speaking less to Marius than to his cravat. "There ought to be a dash of Patron-Minette in this." That word struck Marius. "Patron-Minette," said he. "Indeed, I heard that word pronounced." And he related to the inspector the dialogue between the long-haired man and the bearded man in the snow behind the wall on the Rue du Petit Banquier. The inspector muttered: "The long-haired one must be Brujon, and the bearded one must be Demi-Liard, alias Deux-Milliards. He had dropped his eyes again, and was considering.

"As to the Father What's-his-name, I have a suspicion of who he is. There, I have burnt my coat. They always make too much fire in these cursed stoves. Number 50-52. Old Gorbau property." Then he looked at Marius: "You have seen only this bearded man and this long-haired man?" "And Panchaud." "You did not see a sort of little devilish rat prowling about there?" "No." "Nor a great, big, clumsy heap, like the elephant in the Jardin des Plantes?" "No." "Nor a villain who has the appearance of an old mountebank?" "No." "As to the fourth, nobody sees him, not even his helpers, clerks, and agents. It is not very surprising that you did not see him." "No. What are all these beings?" inquired Marius. The inspector answered: "And then it is not their hour."

He relapsed into silence, then resumed: "No. 50-52. I know the

shanty. Impossible to hide ourselves in the interior without the artists perceiving us, then they would leave and break up the play. They are so modest! the public annoys them. None of that, none of that. I want to hear them sing, and make them dance." This monologue finished, he turned towards Marius and asked him, looking steadily at him: "Will you be afraid?" "Of what?" said Marius. "Of these men?" "No more than of you!" replied Marius rudely, who began to notice that this police spy had not yet called him Monsieur.

The inspector looked at Marius still more steadily, and continued with a sententious solemnity: "You speak now like a brave man and an honest man. Courage does not fear crime, and honesty does not fear authority." Marius interrupted him: "That is well enough; but what are you going to do?" The inspector merely answered: "The lodgers in that house have latch-keys to get in with at night. You must have one?" "Yes," said Marius. "Have you it with you?" "Yes." "Give it to me," said the inspector. Marius took his key from his waist-coat, handed it to the inspector, and added: "If you believe me, you will come in force."

The inspector threw a glance upon Marius such as Voltaire would have thrown upon a provincial academician who had proposed a rhyme to him; with a single movement he plunged both his hands, which were enormous, into the two immense pockets of his overcoat, and took out two small steel pistols, of the kind called fisticuffs. He presented them to Marius, saying hastily and abruptly: "Take these. Go back home. Hide yourself in your room, let them think you have gone out. They are loaded. Each with two balls. You will watch; there is a hole in the wall, as you have told me. The men will come. Let them go on a little. When you deem the affair at a point, and when it is time to stop it, you will fire off a pistol. Not too soon. The rest is my affair. A pistol shot in the air, into the ceiling, no matter where. Above all, not too soon. Wait till the consummation is commenced; you are a lawyer, you know what that is."

Marius took the pistols and put them in the side pocket of his coat. "They make a bunch that way," said the inspector. "Put them in your fobs rather." Marius hid his pistols in his fobs. "Now," pursued the inspector, "there is not a minute to be lost by anybody. What time is it? Half past two. It is at seven?" "Six o'clock," said Marius. "I have time enough," continued the inspector, "but I have only enough. Forget nothing of what I told you. Bang! A pistol shot." "Be assured," answered Marius. And as Marius placed his hand on the latch of the door to go out, the inspector called to him: "By the way, if you need me between now and then, come or send here. You will ask for Inspector Javert."

## XV

### JONDRLETTE MAKES HIS PURCHASE.

A few moments afterwards, towards three o'clock, Courfeyrac happened to pass along the Rue Mouffetard in company with Bossuet.

The snow was falling still faster, and filled the air. Bossuet was just saying to Courfeyrac: "To see all these snow flakes falling, one would say that there is a swarm of white butterflies in the sky." All at once Bossuet perceived Marius, who was going up the street towards the *barrière* with a very peculiar appearance. "Hold on, Marius," said Bossuet. "I saw him," said Courfeyrac. "Don't speak to him." "Why?" "He is busy." "At what?" "Don't you see how he looks?" "What look?" "He has the appearance of a man who is following somebody." "That is true," said Bossuet. "And see what eyes he is making!" added Courfeyrac. "But who the devil is he following?" "Some dreary-sweet-flowery-bonnet! he is in love." "But," observed Bossuet, "I do not see any dreary, nor any sweet, nor any flowery bonnet in the street. There is no woman." Courfeyrac looked, and exclaimed: "He is following a man!"

In fact a man, with a cap on his head, and whose grey beard they distinguished although only his back could be seen, was walking some twenty paces in advance of Marius. This man was dressed in a new over-coat, which was too large for him, and a horrid pair of pantaloons in tatters and black with mud. Bossuet burst out laughing. "Who is that man?" "He?" replied Courfeyrac, "he is a poet. Poets are fond of wearing the trowsers of a rabbit-skin pedlar, and the coat of a peer of France." "Let us see where Marius is going," said Bossuet, "let us see where this man is going, let us follow them, eh?" "Bossuet!" exclaimed Courfeyrac, "Eagle of Meaux! you are a prodigious fool. Follow a man who is following a man!" They went on their way.

Marius had in fact seen Jondrette passing along the *Rue Mouffetard*, and was watching him. Jondrette went straight on without suspecting that there was now an eye fixed upon him. He left the *Rue Mouffetard*, and Marius saw him go into one of the most wretched places on *Rue Gracieuse*; he stayed there about a quarter of an hour, and then returned to the *Rue Mouffetard*. He stopped at a hardware store, which there was in those times at the corner of the *Rue Pierre Lombard*, and, after a few minutes, Marius saw him come out of the shop, holding in his hand a large cold chisel with a white wooden handle which he concealed under his coat. At the upper end of the *Rue de Petit Gentilly*, he turned to the left and walked rapidly to the *Rue du Petit Banquier*. Night was falling and the snow which had ceased to fall for a moment was beginning again; Marius hid just at the corner of *Rue du Petit Banquier*, which was solitary, as usual, and did not follow Jondrette further. It was fortunate that he did, for, on reaching the low wall where Marius had heard the long haired and bearded man talking, Jondrette turned around, made sure that nobody was following him or saw him, then stepped over the wall and disappeared. The grounds which this wall bounded communicated with the rear court of an old livery stable-keeper of bad repute, who had failed, but who had still a few old vehicles under his sheds.

Marius thought it best to take advantage of Jondrette's absence to get home; besides, it was getting late; every evening, Ma'am Bourgon, on going out to wash her dishes in the city, was in the habit of closing the house door, which was always locked at dusk; Marius had given his key to the inspector of police; it was important, therefore, that he should make haste.

Evening had come; night had almost closed in; there was now but one spot in the horizon or in the whole sky which was lighted by the sun; that was the moon. She was rising red behind the low dome of La Salpêtrière.

Marius returned to No. 50-52 with rapid strides. The door was still open when he arrived. He ascended the stairs on tiptoe, and glided along the wall of the hall as far as his room. This hall, it will be remembered, was lined on both sides by garrets, which were all that time empty and to let. Ma'am Bourgon usually left the doors open. As he passed by one of these doors, Marius thought he perceived in the unoccupied cell four motionless heads, which were made dimly visible by a remnant of daylight falling through the little window. Marius, not wishing to be seen, did not endeavor to see. He succeeded in getting into his room without being perceived and without any noise. It was time. A moment afterwards, he heard Ma'am Bourgon going out and closing the door of the house.

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## XVI.

IN WHICH WILL BE FOUND THE SONG TO AN ENGLISH AIR IN FASHION  
IN 1832.

Marius sat down on his bed. It might have been half-past five o'clock. A half-hour only separated him from what was to come. He heard his arteries beat as one hears the ticking of a watch in the dark. He thought of this double march that was going on at that moment in the darkness, crime advancing on the one hand, justice coming on the other. He was not afraid, but he could not think without a shudder of the things which were so soon to take place. To him, as to all those whom some surprising adventure has suddenly befallen, this whole day seemed but a dream; and, to assure himself that he was not the prey of a nightmare, he had to feel the chill of the two steel pistols in his fob-pockets.

It was not now snowing; the moon, growing brighter and brighter, was getting clear of the haze, and its light, mingled with the white reflexion from the fallen snow, gave the room a twilight appearance.

There was a light in the Jondrette den. Marius saw the hole in the partition shine with a red gleam which appeared to him bloody. He was sure that this gleam could hardly be produced by a candle. However, there was no movement in the room, nobody was stirring there, nobody spoke, not a breath, the stillness was icy and deep, and, save for that light, he could have believed that he was beside a sepulchre.

Marius took his boots off softly, and pushed them under his bed. Some minutes passed. Marius heard the lower door turn on its hinges; a heavy and rapid step ascended the stairs and passed along the corridor, the latch of the garret was noisily lifted; Jondrette came in.

Several voices were heard immediately. The whole family was in the garret. Only they kept silence in the absence of the master, like the cubs in the absence of the wolf. "It is me," said he. "Good evening, *pèremuche*," squeaked the daughters. "Well!" said the mother. "All goes to a charm," answered Jondrette, "but my feet are as cold as

a dog's. Good, that is right, you are dressed up. You must be able to inspire confidence." "All ready to go out" "You will forget nothing of what I told you! you will do the whole of it?" "Rest assured about that" "Because—," said Jondrette. And he did not finish the sentence.

Marius heard him put something heavy on the table, probably the chisel which he had bought. "Ah, ha!" said Jondrette, "have you been eating here?" "Yes," said the mother, "I have had three big potatoes and some salt. I took advantage of the fire to cook them." "Well," replied Jondrette, "to-morrow I will take you to dine with me. There will be a duck and the accompaniments. You shall dine like Charles X.; everything is going well!"

Then he added, lowering his voice: "The mouse-trap is open; the cats are ready." He lowered his voice still more, and said: "Put that into the fire." Marius heard a sound of charcoal as if somebody was striking it with pincers or some iron tool, and Jondrette continued: "Have you greased the hinges of the door, so that they shall not make any noise?" "Yes," answered the mother. "What time is it?" "Six o'clock, almost. The half has just struck at Saint Médard." "The devil!" said Jondrette, "the girls must go and stand watch. Come here, you children, and listen to me." There was a whispering. Jondrette's voice rose again: "Has Bourgon gone out?" "Yes," said the mother. "Are you sure there is nobody at home in our neighbor's room?" "He has not been back to-day, and you know that it is his dinner-time." "You are sure?" "Sure" "It is all the same," replied Jondrette; "there is no harm in going to see whether he is at home. Daughter, take the candle and go."

Marius dropped on his hands and knees, and crept noiselessly under the bed. Hardly had he concealed himself, when he perceived a light through the cracks of his door. "P'pa," cried a voice, "he has gone out." He recognised the voice of the elder girl. "Have you gone in?" asked the father. "No," answered the girl, "but as his key is in his door, he has gone out." The father cried: "Go in just the same."

The door opened, and Marius saw the tall girl come in with a candle. She had the same appearance as in the morning, except that she was still more horrible in this light.

She walked straight towards the bed. Marius had a moment of inexpressible anxiety, but there was a mirror nailed on the wall near the bed; it was to that she was going. She stretched up on tiptoe and looked at herself in it. A sound of old iron rattling was heard in the next room.

She smoothed her hair with the palm of her hand, and smiled at the mirror, singing the while in her sepulchral voice:

Nos amours ont duré tout une semaine,  
Mais que du bonheur les instants sont courts!  
S'adorer huit jours, c'était bien la peine!  
Le tems des amours devrait durer toujours!  
Deviendrait durer toujours! devrait durer toujours!

Meanwhile Marius was trembling. It seemed impossible to him that she should not hear his breathing.

She went to the window and looked out, speaking aloud in her half-crazy way. "How ugly Paris is when he puts a white shirt on," said she. She returned to the mirror and renewed her grimaces, taking alternately front and three quarter views of herself. "Well," cried her father, "what are you doing now?" "I am looking under the bed and the furniture," answered she, continuing to arrange her hair; "there is nobody here." "Booby!" howled the father. "Here immediately, and let us lose no time." "I am coming! I am coming!" said she. "One has no time for anything in this shanty." She hummed:

Vous me quittez pour aller à la gloire,  
Mon triste cœur suivra partout vos pas.

She cast a last glance at the mirror, and went out, shutting the door after her.

A moment afterwards, Marius heard the sound of the bare feet of the two young girls in the passage, and the voice of Jondrette crying to them:

"Pay attention, now! one towards the barrière, the other at the corner of the Rue du Petit Banquier. Don't lose sight of the house door a minute, and if you see the least thing, here immediately! tumble along! You have a key to come in with." The elder daughter muttered: "To stand sentry bare-foot in the snow!" "To-morrow you shall have boots of beetle color silk!" said the father. They went down the stairs, and, a few seconds afterwards, the sound of the lower door shutting announced that they had gone out.

There were now in the house only Marius and the Jondrettes, and probably also the mysterious beings of whom Marius had caught a glimpse in the twilight behind the door of the untenanted garret.

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## XVII.

### USE OF MARIUS' FIVE-FRANC PIECE.

Marius judged that the time had come to resume his place at his observatory. In a twinkling, and with the agility of his age, he was at the hole in the partition.

He looked in. The interior of the Jondrette apartment presented a singular appearance, and Marius found the explanation of the strange light which he had noticed. A candle was burning in a verdigrised candlestick, but it was not that which really lighted the room. The entire den was, as it were, illuminated by the reflection of a large sheet-iron furnace in the fireplace, which was filled with lighted charcoal. The fire which the female Jondrette had made ready in the daytime. The charcoal was burning, and the furnace was red-hot; a blue flame danced over it and helped to show the form of the chisel bought by Jondrette in the Rue Pierre Lombard, which was growing ruddy among the coals. In a corner near the door, and arranged as if for anticipated use, were two heaps which appeared to be, one a heap of old iron, the other a heap of ropes. All this would have made one, who had known nothing of what was going forward, waver between a very sinister idea and a very

simple idea. The room thus lighted up, seemed rather a smithy than a mouth of hell; but Jondrette, in that glare, had rather the appearance of a demon than of a blacksmith.

The heat of the glowing coals was such that the candle upon the table melted on the side towards the furnace and was burning fastest on that side. An old copper dark lantern, worthy of Diogenes turned Cartouche, stood upon the mantle. The furnace, which was set into the fireplace, beside the almost extinguished embers, sent its smoke into the flue of the chimney and exhaled no odor.

The moon, shining through the four panes of the window, threw its whiteness into the ruddy and flaming garret; and to Marius's poetic mind, a dreamer even in the moment of action, it was like a thought from heaven mingled with the shapeless nightmares of earth. A breath of air, coming through the broken pane, helped to dissipate the charcoal odor and to conceal the furnace.

The Jondrette lair was—if the reader remembers what we have said of the Gorbeau house—admirably chosen for the theatre of a deed of darkness and violence, and for the concealment of a crime. It was the most retired room of the most isolated house of the most solitary boulevard in Paris. If ambuscade had not existed, it would have been invented there. The whole depth of a house and a multitude of untenanted rooms separated this hole from the boulevard, and its only window opened upon waste fields inclosed with walls and palisade fences.

Jondrette had lighted his pipe, sat down on the dismantled chair, and was smoking. His wife was speaking to him in a low tone.

If Marius had been Coufeyrac, that is to say one of those men who laugh at every opportunity in life, he would have burst with laughter when his eye fell upon this woman. She had on a black hat with plumes somewhat similar to the hats of the heralds-at-arms at the consecration of Charles X, an immense tartan shawl over her knit skirt, and the man's shoes which her daughter had disdained in the morning. It was this toilet which had drawn from Jondrette the exclamation: *Good! you are dressed up! you have done well! You must be able to inspire confidence!*

As to Jondrette, he had not taken off the new surtout, too large for him, which M. Leblanc had given him, and his costume continued to offer that contrast between the coat and the pantaloons which constituted in Coufeyrac's eyes the ideal of a poet.

Suddenly Jondrette raised his voice: "By the way, now, I think of it! In such weather as this he will come in a fiacre. Light the lantern, take it, and go down. You will stay there behind the lower door. The moment you hear the carriage stop, you will open immediately, he will come up, you will light him up the stairs and above the hall, and when he comes in here, you will go down again immediately, pay the driver, and send the fiacre away." "And the money?" asked the woman. Jondrette fumbled in his trousers, and handed her five francs. "What is that?" she exclaimed. Jondrette answered with dignity: "It is the monarch which our neighbor gave this morning." And he added: "Do you know? we must have two chairs here." "What for?" "To sit in."

Marius felt a shiver run down his back on hearing the woman make

this quiet reply: "Pardieu! I will get our neighbor's." And with rapid movement she opened the door of the den, and went out into the hall. Marius had not the time to get down from the bureau, and go and hide himself under the bed. "Take the candle," cried Jondrette. "No," said she, "that would bother me; I have two chairs to bring. It is moonlight."

Marius heard the heavy hand of mother Jondrette groping after his key in the dark. The door opened. He stood nailed to his place by apprehension and stupor.

The woman came in. The gable window let in a ray of moonlight, between two great sheets of shadow. One of these sheets of shadow entirely covered the wall against which Marius was leaning, so as to conceal him. The mother Jondrette raised her eyes, did not see Marius, took the two chairs, the only chairs which Marius had, and went out, slamming the door noisily behind her.

She went back into the den. "Here are the two chairs." "And here is the lantern," said the husband. "Go down quick." She hastily obeyed, and Jondrette was left alone.

He arranged the two chairs on the two sides of the table, turned the chisel over in the fire, put an old screen in front of the fireplace, which concealed the furnace, then went to the corner where the heap of ropes was, and stooped down, as if to examine something. Marius then perceived that what he had taken for a shapeless heap, was a rope ladder, very well made, with wooden rounds, and two large hooks to hang it by. This ladder and a few big tools, actual masses of iron, which were thrown upon the pile of old iron heaped up behind the door were not in the Jondrette den in the morning, and had evidently been brought there in the afternoon, during Marius's absence. "Those are smith's tools," thought Marius.

Had Marius been a little better informed in this line, he would have recognised in what he took for smith's tools, certain instruments capable of picking a lock or forcing a door, and others capable of cutting or hacking,—the two families of sinister tools, which thieves call *cadets* and *fauchants*.

The fireplace and the table, with the two chairs, were exactly opposite Marius. The furnace was hidden; the room was now lighted only by the candle; the least thing upon the table or the mantel made a great shadow. A broken water-pitcher masked the half of one wall. There was in the room a calm which was inexpressibly hideous and threatening. The approach of some appalling thing could be felt.

Jondrette had let his pipe go out—a sure sign that he was intensely absorbed—and had come back and sat down. The candle made the savage ends and corners of his face stand out prominently. There were contractions of his brows, and abrupt openings of his right hand, as if he were replying to the last counsels of a dark interior monologue. In one of these obscure replies which he was making to himself, he drew the table drawer out quickly towards him, took out a long carving knife which was hidden there, and tried its edge on his nail. This done, he put the knife back into the drawer, and shut it.

Marius, for his part, grasped the pistol which was in his right fob pocket, took it out and cocked it.



The pistol in cocking gave a little clear, sharp sound.

Jondrette started, and half rose from his chair. "Who is there?" cried he.

Marius held his breath; Jondrette listened a moment, then began to laugh, saying:—"What a fool I am? It is the partition cracking."

Marius kept the pistol in his hand.

## XVIII.

### MARIUS'S TWO CHAIRS FACE EACH OTHER.

Just then the distant and melancholy vibration of a bell shook the windows. Six o'clock struck at Saint Medard.

Jondrette marked each stroke with a nod of his head. At the sixth stroke, he snuffed the candle with his fingers. Then he began to walk about the room, listened in the hall, walked, listened again: "Provided he comes!" muttered he; then he returned to his chair.

He had hardly sat down when the door opened. The mother Jondrette had opened it, and stood in the hall making a horrible, amiable grimace, which was lighted up from beneath by one of the holes of the dark lantern. "Walk in," said she. "Walk in, my benefactor," repeated Jondrette, rising precipitately. Monsieur Leblanc appeared.

He had an air of serenity which made him singularly venerable.

He laid four louis upon the table. "Monsieur Fabantou," said he, "that is for your rent and your pressing wants. We will see about the rest." "God reward you, my generous benefactor!" said Jondrette, and rapidly approaching his wife: "Send away the fiacre!"

She slipped away, while her husband was lavishing bows and offering a chair to Monsieur Leblanc. A moment afterwards she came back and whispered in his ear: "It is done."

The snow which had been falling ever since morning, was so deep that they had not heard the fiacre arrive, and did not hear it go away.

Meanwhile Monsieur Leblanc had taken a seat. Jondrette had taken possession of the other chair opposite Monsieur Leblanc.

Now, to form an idea of the scene which follows, let the reader call to mind the chilly night, the solitudes of La Salpêtrière covered with snow, and white in the moonlight, like immense shrouds, the flickering light of the street lamps here and there reddening these tragic boulevards and the long rows of black elms, not a passer perhaps within a mile around, the Gorbeau tenement at its deepest degree of silence, horror and night, in that tenement, in the midst of these solitudes, in the midst of this darkness, the vast Jondrette garret lighted by a candle, and in this den two men seated at a table, Monsieur Leblanc tranquil, Jondrette smiling and terrible, his wife the wolf dam, in a corner, and, behind the partition, Marius, invisible, alert, losing no word, losing no movement, his eye on the watch, the pistol in his grasp.

Marius, moreover, was experiencing nothing but an emotion of horror, no fear. He clasped the butt of the pistol, and felt reassured. "I shall stop this wretch when I please," thought he.

He felt that the police was somewhere near by in ambush, awaiting

the signal agreed upon, and all ready to stretch out its arm. He hoped, moreover, that from this terrible meeting between Jondrette and Monsieur Leblanc, some light would be thrown upon all that he was interested to know.

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## XIX.

### THE DISTRACTIONS OF DARK CORNERS.

No sooner was Monsieur Leblanc seated than he turned his eyes towards the empty pallets.

"How does the poor little injured girl do?" he inquired. "Badly," answered Jondrette, with a doleful yet grateful smile, "very badly, my worthy monsieur. Her elder sister has taken her to the Bourbe to have her arm dressed. You will see them, they will be back directly." "Madame Fabantou appears to me much better?" resumed Monsieur Leblanc, casting his eyes upon the grotesque accoutrement of the female Jondrette, who, standing between him and the door, as if she were already guarding the exit, was looking at him in a threatening and almost a defiant posture. "She is dying," said Jondrette. "But you see, monsieur! she has so much courage, that woman! She is not a woman, she is an ox." The woman, touched by the compliment, retorted with the smirk of a flattered monster: "You are always too kind to me, Monsieur Jondrette." "Jondrette!" said M. Leblanc, "I thought that your name was Fabantou?"

"Fabantou or Jondrette!" replied the husband hastily. "Sobriquet as an artist!"

And, directing a shrug of the shoulders towards his wife, which M. Leblanc did not see, he continued with an emphatic and caressing tone of voice: "Ah! how well we have always got along together, this poor dear and I! What would be left to us, if it were not for that? We are so unfortunate, my respected monsieur! We have arms, no labor! We have courage, no work! I do not know how the government arranges it, but, upon my word of honor, I am no Jacobin, monsieur, I am no brawler, I wish them no harm, but if I were the ministers, upon my most sacred word, it would go differently. Now, for example, I wanted to have my girls learn the trade of making card boxes. You will say: What! a trade? Yes! a trade! a simple trade! a living! What a fall, my benefactor! What a degradation, when one has been what we were! Alas! we have nothing left from our days of prosperity! Nothing but one single thing, a painting, to which I cling, but yet which I shall have to part with, for we must live! item, we must live!"

While Jondrette was talking, with an apparent disorder which detracted nothing from the crafty and cunning expression of his physiognomy, Marius raised his eyes, and perceived at the back of the room somebody whom he had not before seen. A man had come in so noiselessly, that nobody had heard the door turn on its hinges. This man had a knit woollen waistcoat of violet color, old, worn out, stained, cut, and showing gaps at all its folds, full trousers of cotton velvet, socks on his feet,

no shirt, his neck bare, his arms bare and tattooed, and his face stained black. He sat down in silence and with folded arms on the nearest bed, and as he kept behind the woman, he was distinguished only with difficulty.

That kind of magnetic instinct which warns the eye, made M. Leblanc turn almost at the same time with Marius. He could not help a movement of surprise, which did not escape Jondrette: "Ah! I see," exclaimed Jondrette, buttoning up his coat with a complacent air, "you are looking at your overcoat. It's a fit! my faith, it's a fit!" "Who is that man?" said M. Leblanc.

"That man?" said Jondrette, "that is a neighbor. Pay no attention to him."

The neighbor had a singular appearance. However, factories of chemical products abound in the Faubourg Saint Marceau. Many machinists might have their faces blacked. The whole person of M. Leblanc, moreover, breathed a candid and intrepid confidence. He resumed: "Pardon me; what were you saying to me, Monsieur Fabantou?" "I was telling you, monsieur and dear patron," replied Jondrette, leaning his elbows on the table, and gazing at M. Leblanc with fixed and tender eyes, similar to the eyes of a boa constrictor, "I was telling you that I had a picture to sell."

A slight noise was made at the door. A second man entered and sat down on the bed, behind the female Jondrette. He had his arms bare, like the first, and a mask of ink or of soot.

Although this man had, literally, slipped into the room, he could not prevent M. Leblanc from perceiving him. "Do not mind them," said Jondrette. "They are people of the house. I was telling you, then, that I have a valuable painting left. Here, monsieur, look."

He got up, went to the wall, at the foot of which stood the panel of which we have spoken, and turned it round, still leaving it resting against the wall. It was something, in fact, that resembled a picture, and which the candle scarcely revealed. Marius could make nothing out of it, Jondrette being between him and the picture; he merely caught a glimpse of a coarse daub, with a sort of principal personage, colored in the crude and glaring style of strolling panoramas and paintings upon screens. "What is that?" asked M. Leblanc. Jondrette exclaimed: "A painting by a master; a picture of great price, my benefactor! I cling to it as to my two daughters, it calls up memories to me! but I have told you, and I cannot unsay it, I am so unfortunate that I would part with it."

Whether by chance, or whether there was some beginning of distrust, while examining the picture, M. Leblanc glanced towards the back of the room. There were now four men there, three seated on the bed, one standing near the door-casing; all four bare-armed, motionless, and with blackened faces. One of those who were on the bed was leaning against the wall, with his eyes closed, and one would have said he was asleep. This one was old; his white hair over his black face was horrible. The two others appeared young; one was bearded, the other had long hair. None of them had shoes on; those who did not have socks were barefooted.

Jondrette noticed that M. Leblanc's eye was fixed upon these men.

"They are friends. They live near by," said he. "They are dark because they work in charcoal. They are chimney doctors. Do not occupy your mind with them, my benefactor, but buy my picture. Take pity on my misery. I shall not sell it to you at a high price. How much do you estimate it worth?"

"But," said M. Leblanc, looking Jondrette full in the face and like a man who puts himself on his guard, "this is some tavern sign, it is worth about three francs." Jondrette answered calmly: "Have you your pocket-book here? I will be satisfied with a thousand crowns."

M. Leblanc rose to his feet, placed his back to the wall, and ran his eye rapidly over the room. He had Jondrette at his left on the side towards the window, and his wife and the four men at his right on the side towards the door. The four men did not stir, and had not even the appearance of seeing him; Jondrette had begun again to talk in a plaintive key, with his eye so wild and his tones so mournful, that M. Leblanc might have thought that he had before his eyes nothing more nor less than a man gone crazy from misery. "If you do not buy my picture, dear benefactor," said Jondrette, "I am without resources, I have only to throw myself into the river. When I think that I wanted to have my two girls learn to work on cardboard demi-fine, cardboard work for gift-boxes. Well! they must have a table with a board at the bottom so that the glasses shall not fall on the ground, they must have a furnace made on purpose, a pot with three compartments for the different degrees of strength which the paste must have according to whether it is used for wood, for paper, or for cloth, a knife to cut the pasteboard, a gauge to adjust it, a hammer for the stamps, pinchers, the devil, how do I know what else? and all this to earn four sous a day! and work fourteen hours! and every box passes through the girl's hands thirteen times! and wetting the paper! and to stain nothing! and to keep the paste warm! the devil! I tell you! four sous a day! how do you think one can live?"

While speaking, Jondrette did not look at M. Leblanc, who was watching him. M. Leblanc's eye was fixed upon Jondrette, and Jondrette's eye upon the door. Marius's breathless attention went from one to the other. M. Leblanc appeared to ask himself, "Is this an idiot?" Jondrette repeated two or three times with all sorts of varied inflections in the drawling and begging style: "I can only throw myself into the river! I went down three steps for that the other day by the side of the bridge of Austerlitz!"

Suddenly his dull eye lighted up with a hideous glare, this little man straightened up and became horrifying, he took a step towards M. Leblanc and cried to him in a voice of thunder: "But all that is not the question! do you know me?"

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## XX.

### THE AMBUSCADE.

The door of the garret had been suddenly flung open, disclosing three men in blue blouses with black paper masks. The first was spare and

had a long iron-bound cudgel; the second, who was a sort of colossus, held by the middle of the handle, with the axe down, a butcher's pole-axe. The third, a broad-shouldered man, not so thin as the first, nor so heavy as the second, held in his clenched fist an enormous key stolen from some prison door.

It appeared that it was the arrival of these men for which Jondrette was waiting. A rapid dialogue commenced between him and the man with the cudgel, the spare man. "Is everything 'ready?'" said Jondrette. "Yes," answered the spare man. "Where is Montparnasse then?" "The young primate stopped to chat with your daughter." "Which one?" "The elder." "Is there a faïence below?" "Yes." "The *marinotte* is ready?" "Ready." "With two good horses?" "Excellent." "It is waiting where I said it should wait?" "Yes." "Good," said Jondrette.

M. Leblanc was very pale. He looked over everything in the room about him like a man who understands into what he has fallen, and his head, directed in turn towards all the heads which surrounded him, moved on his neck with an attentive and astonished slowness, but there was nothing in his manner which resembled fear. He had made an extemporized intrenchment of the table; and this man who, the moment before, had the appearance only of a good old man; had suddenly become a sort of athlete, and placed his powerful fist upon the back of his chair with a surprising and formidable gesture.

This old man, so firm and so brave before so great a peril, seemed to be one of those natures who are courageous as they are good, simply and naturally. The father of a woman that we love is never a stranger to us. Marius felt proud of this unknown man.

Three of the men of whom Jondrette had said: They are *chimney-doctors*, had taken from the heap of old iron, one a large pair of shears, another a steelyard bar, the third a hammer, and placed themselves before the door without saying a word. The old man was still on the bed, and had merely opened his eyes. The woman Jondrette was sitting beside him.

Marius thought that in a few seconds more the time would come to interfere, and he raised his right hand towards the ceiling, in the direction of the hall, ready to let off his pistol-shot.

Jondrette, after his colloquy with the man with the cudgel, turned again towards M. Leblanc and repeated his question, accompanying it with that low, smothered, and terrible laugh of his: "You do not recognise me, then?" M. Leblanc looked him in the face, and answered: "No." Then Jondrette came up to the table. He leaned forward over the candle, folding his arms, and pushing his angular and ferocious jaws up towards the calm face of M. Leblanc, as nearly as he could without forcing him to draw back, and in that posture, like a wild beast just about to bite, he cried: "My name is not Fabantou, my name is not Jondrette, my name is Thénardier! I am the inn-keeper of Montfermeil! do you understand me? Thénardier! now do you know me?"

An imperceptible flush passed over M. Leblanc's forehead, and he answered without tremor or elevation of voice, and with his usual placidity: "No more than before."

Marius did not hear this answer. Could anybody have seen him at

that moment in that darkness, he would have seen that he was baggard, astounded, and thunder-struck. When Jondrette had said: *My name is Thénardier*, Marius had trembled in every limb, and supported himself against the wall as if he had felt the chill of a sword-blade through his heart. Then his right arm, which was just ready to fire the signal shot, dropped slowly down, and at the moment that Jondrette had repeated: *Do you understand me, Thénardier?* Marius's nerveless fingers had almost dropped the pistol. Jondrette, in unveiling who he was, had not moved M. Leblanc, but he had completely unnerved Marius. That name of Thénardier, which M. Leblanc did not seem to know, Marius knew. Remember what that name was to him! that name he had worn in his heart, written in his father's will! he carried it in the innermost place of his thoughts, in the holiest spot of his memory, in that sacred command: "A man named Thénardier saved my life. If my son should meet him, he will do him all the good he can." That name, we remember, was one of the devotions of his soul; he mingled it with the name of his father in his worship. What! here was Thénardier, here was that Thénardier, here was that inn-keeper of Montfermeil, for whom he had so long and so vainly sought! He had found him at last, and how? This saviour of his father was a bandit! this man, to whom he, Marius, burning to devote himself, was a monster! this deliverer of Colonel Pontmercy was in the actual commission of a crime, the shape of which Marius did not yet see very distinctly, but which looked like an assassination! and upon whom? Great God! what a fatality! what a bitter mockery of Fate! His father from the depths of his coffin commanded him to do all he could for Thénardier; for four years Marius had had no other thought than to acquit this debt of his father, and the moment that he was about to cause a brigand to be seized by justice, in the midst of a crime, destiny called to him: that is Thénardier! His father's life, saved in a storm of grape upon the heroic field of Waterloo, he was at last about to reward this man for, and to reward him with the scaffold! He had resolved, if ever he found Thénardier, to accost him in no other wise than by throwing himself at his feet, and now he found him indeed, but to deliver him to the executioner! His father said to him: Aid Thénardier! and he was answering that adored and holy voice by crushing Thénardier! presenting as a spectacle to his father in his tomb, the man who had snatched him from death at the peril of his life, executed in the Place St Jacques by the act of his son, this Marius to whom he had bequeathed this man! And what a mockery to have worn so long upon his breast the last wishes of his father, written by his hand, only to act so frightfully contrary to them! but, on the other hand, to see this ambushade and not prevent it! to condemn the victim and spare the assassin, could he be bound to any gratitude towards such a wretch? All the ideas which Marius had had for the last four years were, as it were, pierced through and through by this unexpected blow. He shuddered. Everything depended upon him. He held in his hand, they all unconscious, those beings who were moving there before his eyes. If he fired the pistol, M. Leblanc was saved and Thénardier was lost; if he did not, M. Leblanc was sacrificed, and, perhaps, Thénardier escaped. To hurl down the one, or to let the other fall! remorse on either hand. What was to be done? which should he choose? he wanting to his most

imperious memories, to so many deep resolutions, to his most sacred duty, to that most venerated paper! be wanting to his father's will, or suffer a crime to be accomplished? He seemed on the one hand to hear "his Ursula" entreating him for her father, and on the other the Colonel commending Thénardier to him. He felt that he was mad. His knees gave way beneath him; and he had not even time to deliberate, with such fury was the scene which he had before his eyes, rushing forward. It was like a whirlwind, which he had thought himself master of, and which was carrying him away. He was on the point of fainting.

Meanwhile Thénardier, we will call him by no other name henceforth, was walking to and fro before the table in a sort of bewilderment and frenzied triumph.

He clutched the candle and put it on the mantel with such a shock that the flame was almost extinguished and the tallow was spattered upon the wall. Then he turned towards M. Leblanc, and with a frightful look, spit out this: "Singed! smoked! basted! spitted!" And he began to walk again, in full explosion. "Ha?" cried he, "I have found you again at last, Monsieur philanthropist! Monsieur threadbare millionaire! Monsieur giver of dolls! old marrow-bones! ha! you do not know me? no, it was not you who came to Montfermeil, to my inn, eight years ago, the night of Christmas, 1823! it was not you who took away Fantine's child from my house! the Lark! it was not you who had a yellow coat! no! and a package of clothes in your hand just as you came here this morning! say now, wife! it is his mania, it appears, to carry packages of woollen stockings into houses! old benevolence, get out! Are you a hosier, Monsieur millionaire? you give the poor your shop sweepings, holy man! what a charlatan! Ha! you do not know me? Well, I knew you! I knew you immediately as soon as you stuck your nose in here. Ah! you are going to find out at last that it is not all roses to go into people's houses like that, under pretext of their being inns, with worn-out clothes, with the appearance of a pauper, to whom anybody would have given a sou, to deceive persons, to act the generous, to take their help away, and threaten them in the woods, and that you do not get quit of it by bringing back afterward, when people are ruined, an overcoat that is too large and two paltry hospital coverlids, old beggar, child stealer!"

He stopped, appeared to be talking to himself for a moment. One would have said that his fury dropped like the Rhone into some hole; then, as if he were finishing aloud something that he had been saying to himself, he struck his fist on the table and cried:

"With an honest look!"

And apostrophising M. Leblanc:

"Zounds! you made a muck of me once! You are the cause of all my misfortunes! For fifteen hundred francs you got a girl that I had, and who certainly belonged to rich people, and who had already brought me in a good deal of money, and from whom I ought to have got enough to live on all my life! A girl who would have made up all that I lost in that abominable chop-house where they had such royal sprees and where I devoured my all like a fool! Oh! I wish that all the wine that was drunk in my house had been poison to those who drank it! But no

matter! Say, now! you must have thought me green when you went away with the Lark? you had your club in the woods! you were the strongest! Revenge! The trumps are in my hand to-day. You are skunked, my good man! Oh! but don't I laugh! Indeed, I do! Didn't he fall into the trap? I told him that I was an actor, that my name was Fabantou, that I had played comedy with Mamselle Mars, that my landlord must be paid to-morrow, the 4th of February, and he did not even think that the 8th of January is quarter day and not the 4th of February! The ridiculous fool! And these four paltry philippes that he brings me! Rascal! He had not even heart enough to go up to a hundred francs! And how he swallowed my platitudes! The fellow amused me. I said to myself: Blubber-lips! Go on, I have got you, I lick your paws this morning! I will gnaw your heart to-night!"

Thénardier stopped. He was out of breath. His little narrow chest was blowing like a blacksmith's bellows. His eye was full of the base delight of a feeble, cruel, and cowardly animal, which can finally prostrate that of which it has stood in awe, and insult what it has flattered, the joy of a dwarf putting his heel upon the head of Goliath, the joy of a jackal beginning to tear a sick bull, dead enough not to be able to defend himself, alive enough yet to suffer.

M. Leblanc did not interrupt him, but said when he stopped: "I do not know what you mean. You are mistaken. I am a very poor man and anything but a millionaire. I do not know you; you mistake me for another." "Ha!" screamed Thénardier, "good mountebank! You stick to that joke yet! You are in the fog, my old boy! Ah! you do not remember! You do not see who I am!"

"Pardon me, Monsieur," answered Leblanc, with a tone of politeness which, at such a moment, had a peculiarly strange and powerful effect, "I see that you are a bandit."

Who has not noticed it, hateful beings have their tender points; monsters are easily annoyed. At this word bandit, the Thénardiess sprang off the bed. Thénardier seized his chair as if he were going to crush it in his hands: "Don't you stir," cried he to his wife, and turning towards M. Leblanc: "Bandit! Yes, I know that you call us so, you rich people! Yes! it is true I have failed; I am in concealment, I have no bread; I have not a sou, I am a bandit! Here are three days that I have eaten nothing, I am a bandit! Ah! you warm your feet; you have Sacoski pumps, you have wadded overcoats like archbishops, you live on the first floor in houses with a porter, you eat truffles, you eat forty-franc bunches of asparagus in the month of January, and green peas, you stuff yourselves, and when you want to know if it is cold you look in the newspaper to see at what degree the thermometer of the inventor, Chevalier, stands. But we are our own thermometers! We have no need to go to the quai at the corner of the Tour de l'Horloge, to see how many degrees below zero it is; we feel the blood stiffen in our veins and the ice reach our hearts, and we say: "There is no God!" And you come into our caverns, yes, into our caverns, and call us bandits. But we will eat you! but we will devour you, poor little things! Monsieur Millionaire! know this:—I have been a man established in business, I have been licensed, I have been



an elector, I am a citizen, I am! And you, perhaps, are not one?" Here Thenardier took a step towards the men who were before the door, and added with a shudder: "When I think that he dares to come and talk to me as if I were a cobbler!"

Then addressing M. Leblanc with a fresh burst of frenzy: "And know this, too, Monsieur philanthropist! I am no doubtful man. I am not a man whose name nobody knows, and who comes into houses to carry off children. I am an old French soldier; I ought to be decorated. I was at Waterloo, I was, and in that battle I saved a general, named the Comte de Pontmercy. This picture which you see, and which was painted by David at Bruqueselles, do you know who it represents? It represents me. David desired to immortalize that feat of arms. I have General Pontmercy on my back, and I am carrying him through the storm of grape. That is history. He has never done anything at all for me, this general; he is no better than other people. But, nevertheless, I saved his life at the risk of my own, and I have my pockets full of certificates. I am a soldier of Waterloo—name of a thousand names! And now, that I have had the goodness to tell you all this, let us make an end of it; I must have some money; I must have a good deal of money, I must have an immense deal of money, or I will exterminate you, by the thunder of God!"

Marius had regained some control over his distress, and was listening. The last probability of doubt had now vanished. It was indeed the Thenardier of the will. Marius shuddered at that reproach of ingratitude flung at his father, and which he was on the point of justifying so fatally. His perplexities were redoubled. Moreover there was in all these words of Thenardier, in his tone, in his gestures, in his look which flashed out flames at every word, there was in this explosion its entire self, in this mixture of braggadocio and abjectness, of pride and pettiness, of rage and folly, in this chaos of real grievances and false sentiments, in this shamelessness of a wicked man tasting the sweetness of violence, in this brazen nakedness of a deformed soul, in this conflagration of every suffering, combined with every hatred, something which was as hideous as evil and as sharp and bitter as the truth.

The picture by a master, the painting by David, the purchase of which he had proposed to M. Leblanc, was, the reader has guessed, nothing more than the sign of his chop-house, painted, as will be remembered, by himself, the only relic which he had saved from his shipwreck at Montfermeil.

As he had ceased to intercept Marius's line of vision, Marius could now look at the thing, and in this daub he really made out a battle, a background of smoke, and one man carrying off another. It was the group of Thenardier and Pontmercy; the savior sergeant, the colonel saved. Marius was as it were intoxicated; this picture in some sort restored his father to life; it was not now the sign of the Montfermeil inn, it was a resurrection; in it a tomb half opened, from it a phantom arose. Marius heard his heart ring in his temples, he had the cannon of Waterloo sounding in his ears; his bleeding father dimly painted upon this dusky panel startled him, and it seemed to him that that shapeless shadow was gazing steadily upon him.

When Thenardier had taken breath, he fixed his bloodshot eyes upon

Monsieur Leblanc, said in a low and abrupt tone: "What have you to say before we begin to dance with you?"

Monsieur Leblanc said nothing. In the midst of this silence a hoarse voice threw in this ghastly sarcasm from the hall: "If there is any wood to split, I am on hand!" It was the man with the pole axe who was making merry. At the same time a huge face, bristly and dirty, appeared in the doorway, with a hideous laugh, which showed not teeth, but fangs. It was the face of the man with the pole-axe.

"What have you taken off your mask for?" cried Thenardier, furiously. "To laugh," replied the man.

For some moments, Monsieur Leblanc had seemed to follow and to watch all the movements of Thénardier, who, blinded and bewildered by his own rage, was walking to and fro in the den with the confidence inspired by the feeling that the door was guarded, having armed possession of a disarmed man, and being nine to one, even should the Thénardiess count for but one man. In his apostrophe to the man with the pole-axe, he turned his back to Monsieur Leblanc.

Monsieur Leblanc seized this opportunity, pushed the chair away with his foot, the table with his hand, and at one bound, with a marvellous agility, before Thenardier had had time to turn around, he was at the window. To open it, get up and step through it was the work of a second. He was half outside, when six strong hands seized him, and drew him forcibly back into the room. The three "chimney doctors" had thrown themselves upon him. At the same time the Thénardiess had clutched him by the hair.

At the disturbance which this made, the other bandits ran in from the hall. The old man, who was on the bed, and who seemed overwhelmed with wine, got off the pallet, and came tottering along with a roadmender's hammer in his hand.

One of the "chimney doctors," whose blackened face was lighted up by the candle, and in whom Marius, in spite of this coloring, recognised Panchaud, alias Printanier, alias Bigrenaille, raised a sort of loaded club made of a bar of iron with a knob of lead at each end, over Monsieur Leblanc's head.

Marius could not endure this sight. "Father," thought he, "pardon me!" And his finger sought the trigger of the pistol. The shot was just about to be fired, when Thenardier's voice cried: "Do him no harm!"

This desperate attempt of the victim, far from exasperating Thénardier, had calmed him. There were two men in him, the ferocious man and the crafty man. Up to this moment, in the first flush of triumph, before his prey stricken down and motionless, the ferocious man had been predominant; when the victim resisted, and seemed to desire a struggle, the crafty man reappeared and resumed control.

"Do him no harm!" he repeated, and without suspecting it, the first result of this was to stop the pistol which was just ready to go off, and paralyze Marius, to whom the urgency seemed to disappear, and who, in view of this new phase of affairs, saw no impropriety in waiting longer. Who knows but some chance may arise which will save him from the fearful alternative of letting the father of Ursula perish, or destroying the savior of the Colonel!

A herculean struggle had commenced. With one blow full in the chest M. Leblanc had sent the old man sprawling into the middle of the room, then with two back strokes had knocked down two other assailants, whom he held one under each knee; the wretches screamed under the pressure as if they had been under a granite mill-stone; but the four others had seized the formidable old man by the arms and the back, and held him down over the two prostrate "chimney doctors." Thus, master of the latter and mastered by the former, crushing those below him and suffocating under those above him, vainly endeavoring to shake off all the violence of the blows which were heaped upon him, M. Leblanc disappeared under the horrible group of bandits, like a wild boar under a howling pack of hounds and mastiffs.

They succeeded in throwing him over upon the bed nearest to the window, and held him there in awe. The Thenardiess had not let go of his hair. "Here," said Thénardier, "let it alone. You will tear your shawl." The Thenardiess obeyed as the she-wolf obeys her mate, with a growl. "Now, the rest of you," continued Thénardier, "search him."

M. Leblanc seemed to have given up all resistance. They searched him. There was nothing upon him but a leather purse which contained six francs, and his handkerchief. Thénardier put the handkerchief in his pocket. "What! no pocket book?" he asked. "Nor any watch," answered one of the "chimney doctors." "It is all the same," muttered, with the voice of a ventriloquist, the masked man who had the big key, "he is an old rough."

Thénardier went to the corner by the door and took a bundle of ropes which he threw to them. "Tie him to the foot of the bed," said he, and perceiving the old fellow who lay motionless, when he was stretched across the room by the blow of M. Leblanc's fist: "Is Boulatruelle dead?" asked he. "No," answered Bigrenaille, "he is drunk." "Sweep him into a corner," said Thénardier. Two of the "chimney doctors" pushed the drunkard up to the heap of old iron with their feet.

"Babet, what did you bring so many for?" said Thénardier in a low tone to the man with the cudgel, "it was needless."

"What would you have?" replied the man with the cudgel, "they all wanted to be in. The season is bad. There is nothing doing."

The pallet upon which M. Leblanc had been thrown was a sort of hospital bed supported by four big roughly squared wooden posts. M. Leblanc made no resistance. The brigands bound him firmly, standing, with his feet to the floor, by the bed post furthest from the window and nearest to the chimney.

When the last knot was tied, Thénardier took a chair and came and sat down nearly in front of M. Leblanc. Thénardier looked no longer like himself, in a few seconds the expression of his face had passed from unbridled violence to tranquil and crafty mildness. Marius hardly recognised in that polite, clerkly smile, the almost beastly mouth which was foaming a moment before; he looked with astonishment upon this fantastic and alarming metamorphosis, and he experienced what a man would feel who should see a tiger change itself into an attorney.

"Monsieur," said Thénardier. And with a gesture dismissing the

brigands who still had their hands upon M. Leblanc: "Move off a little, and let me talk with Monsieur." They all retired towards the door. He resumed: "Monsieur, you were wrong in trying to jump out the window. You might have broken your leg. Now, if you please, we will talk quietly. In the first place I must inform you of a circumstance I have noticed, which is that you have not yet made the least outcry."

Thénardier was right; this incident was true, although it had escaped Marius in his anxiety. M. Leblanc had only uttered a few words without raising his voice, and, even in his struggle by the window with the six bandits, he had preserved the most profound and the most remarkable silence. Thénardier continued:

"Indeed! you might have cried thief a little, for I should not have found it inconvenient. Murder! that is said upon occasion, and, as far as I am concerned, I should not have taken it in bad part. It is very natural that one should make a little noise when he finds himself with persons who do not inspire him with as much confidence as they might; you might have done it, and we should not have disturbed you. We would not even have gagged you. And I will tell you why. It is because this room is very deaf. That is all I can say for it, but I can say that. It is a cave. We could fire a bomb here, and at the nearest guard-house it would sound like a drunkard's snore. Here a cannon would go boom, and thunder would go puff. It is a convenient apartment. But, in short, you did not cry out, that was better, I make you my compliments for it, and I will tell you what I conclude from it: my dear Monsieur, when a man cries out, who is it that comes? The police. And after the police? Justice. Well! you did not cry out; because you were no more anxious than we to see justice and the police come. It is because—I suspected as much long ago—you have some interest in concealing something. For our part we have the same interest. Now we can come to an understanding."

While speaking thus, it seemed as though Thénardier, with his gaze fixed upon Monsieur Leblanc, was endeavoring to thrust the daggers which he looked into the very conscience of his prisoner. His language, moreover, marked by a sort of subdued and sullen insolence, was reserved and almost select, and in this wretch who was just before nothing but a brigand, one could now perceive "the man who studied to be a priest."

The silence which the prisoner had preserved, this precaution which he had carried even to the extent of endangering his life, this resistance to the first impulse of nature, which is to utter a cry, all this, it must be said, since it had been remarked, was annoying to Marius, and painfully astonished him.

The observation of Thénardier, well founded as it was, added in Marius's eyes still more to the obscurity of the mysterious cloud that enveloped this strange and serious face to which Courfeyrac had given the nickname of Monsieur Leblanc. But whatever he might be, bound with ropes, surrounded by assassins, half buried, so to speak, in a grave which was deepening beneath him every moment, before the fury as well as before the mildness of Thénardier, this man remained impassible; and Marius could not repress at such a moment his admiration for that superbly melancholy face.

Here was evidently a soul inaccessible to fear, and ignorant of dismay. Here was one of those men who are superior to astonishment in desperate situations. However extreme the crisis, however inevitable the catastrophe, there was nothing there of the agony of the drowning man, staring with horrified eyes as he sinks to the bottom.

Thénardier quietly got up, went to the fireplace, took away the screen which he leaned against the nearest pallet, and thus revealed the furnace full of glowing coals in which the prisoner could plainly see the chisel at a white heat, spotted here and there with little scarlet stars.

Then Thénardier came back and sat down by Monsieur Leblanc. "I continue," said he. "Now we can come to an understanding. Let us arrange this amicably. I was wrong to fly into a passion just now. I do not know where my wits were, I went much too far. I talked extravagantly. For instance because you are a millionaire, I told you that I wanted money, a good deal of money, an immense deal of money. That would not be reasonable. My God, rich as you may be, you have your expenses; who does not have them? I do not want to ruin you, I am not a catch-poll, after all. I am not one of those people who, because they have the advantage in position, use it to be ridiculous. Here, I am willing to go half way and make some sacrifice on my part. I need only two hundred thousand francs."

Monsieur Leblanc did not breathe a word. Thénardier went on:

"You see that I water my wine pretty well. I do not know the state of your fortune, but I know that you do not care much for money, and a benevolent man like you can certainly give two hundred thousand francs to a father of a family who is unfortunate. Certainly you are reasonable also, you do not imagine that I would take the trouble I have to-day, and that I would organize the affair of this evening, which is a very fine piece of work, in the opinion of these gentlemen, to end off by assing you for enough to go and drink fifteen sou red wine and eat veal at Desnoyer's. Two hundred thousand francs, it is worth it. That trifles out of your pocket, I assure you that all is said, and that you need not fear a snap of the finger. You will say: 'but I have not two hundred thousand francs with me.' Oh! I am not exacting. I do not require that. I only ask one thing. Have the goodness to write what I shall dictate." Here Thénardier paused, then he added, emphasising each word and casting a smile towards the furnace: "I give you notice that I shall not admit that you cannot write." A grand inquisitor might have envied that smile.

Thénardier pushed the table close up to Monsieur Leblanc, and took the inkstand, a pen, and a sheet of paper from the drawer, which he left partly open, and from which gleamed the long blade of the knife. He laid the sheet of paper before Monsieur Leblanc. "Write," said he.

The prisoner spoke at last: "How do you expect me to write? I am tied." "That is true, pardon me," said Thénardier, "You are quite right." And turning towards Bigrenaille: "Untie Monsieur's right arm." Panchaud, alias Printanier, alias Bigrenaille, executed Thénardier's order. When the prisoner's right hand was free, Thénardier dipped the pen into the ink, and presented it to him. "Remem-

ber, Monsieur, that you are in our power, at our discretion, that no human power can take you away from here, and that we should be really grieved to be obliged to proceed to unpleasant extremities. I know neither your name nor your address, but I give you notice that you will remain tied until the person whose duty it will be to carry the letter which you are about to write, has returned. Have the kindness now to write." "What?" asked the prisoner. "I will dictate." M. Leblanc took the pen. Thenardier began to dictate: "My daughter—"

The prisoner shuddered and lifted his eyes to Thenardier. "Put my dear daughter," said Thenardier. M. Leblanc obeyed. Thenardier continued: "Come immediately—" He stopped. "You call her daughter, do you not?" "Who?" asked M. Leblanc. "Zounds!" said Thenardier, "the little girl, the Lark." M. Leblanc answered without the least apparent emotion: "I do not know what you mean." "Well, go on," said Thenardier, and he began to dictate again. "Come immediately, I have imperative need of you. The person who will give you this note is directed to bring you to me. I am waiting for you. Come with confidence."

M. Leblanc had written the whole. Thenardier added: "Ah! strike out *come with confidence*, that might lead her to suppose that the thing is not quite clear and that distrust is possible." M. Leblanc erased the three words. "Now," continued Thenardier, "sign it. What is your name?" The prisoner laid down the pen and asked: "For whom is this letter?" "You know very well," answered Thenardier, "for the little girl, I have just told you."

It was evident that Thenardier avoided naming the young girl in question. He said "the Lark," he said "the little girl," but he did not pronounce the name. The precaution of a shrewd man preserving his own secret before his accomplices. To speak the name would have been to give up the whole "affair" to them, and to tell them more than they needed to know.

He resumed: "Sign it. What is your name?" "Urbain Fabre," said the prisoner. Thenardier, with the movement of a cat, thrust his hand into his pocket and pulled out the handkerchief taken from M. Leblanc. He looked for the mark upon it and held it up to the candle.

"U. F. That is it. Urbain Fabre. Well, sign U. F." The prisoner signed.

"As it takes two hands to fold the letter, give it to me, I will fold it." This done, Thenardier resumed: "Put on the address, *Mademoiselle Fabre*, at your house. I know that you live not very far from here, in the neighborhood of Saint Jacques du Haut Pas, since you go there to mass every day, but I do not know in what street. I see that you understand your situation. As you have not lied about your name, you will not lie about your address. Put it on yourself."

The prisoner remained thoughtful for a moment, then he took the pen and wrote: "*Mademoiselle Fabre*, at Monsieur Urbain Fabre's, Rue Saint Dominique d'Enfer, No 17"

Thenardier seized the letter with a sort of feverish convulsive movement. "Wife," cried he. The Thenardiess sprang forward. "Here is the letter. You know what you have to do. There is a fiacre below. Go right away, and come back ditto." And addressing the man with

the pole-axe: "Here, since you have taken off your hide-your-nose, go with the woman. You will get up behind the fiacre. You know where you left the *maringotte*." "Yes," said the man. And, laying down his pole-axe in a corner, he followed the Thénardiess.

As they were going away, Thénardier put his head through the half-open door and screamed into the hall: "Above all things do not lose the letter! remember that you have two hundred thousand francs with you." The harsh voice of the Thénardiess answered: "Rest assured, I have put it in my bosom."

A minute had not passed when the snapping of a whip was heard, which grew fainter and rapidly died away. "Good," muttered Thénardier. "They are going good speed. At that speed the bourgeoisie will be back in three quarters of an hour." He drew a chair near the fireplace and sat down, folding his arms and holding his muddy boots up to the furnace. "My feet are cold," said he.

There were now but five bandits left in the den with Thénardier and the prisoner. These men, through the masks or the black varnish which covered their faces and made of them, as fear might suggest, charcoal-men, negroes, or demons, had a heavy and dismal appearance, and one felt that they would execute a crime as they would any drudgery, quietly, without anger and without mercy, with a sort of irksomeness. They were heaped together in a corner like brutes, and were silent. Thénardier was warming his feet. The prisoner had relapsed into his taciturnity. A gloomy stillness had succeeded the savage tumult which filled the garret a few moments before.

The candle, in which a large thief had formed, hardly lighted up the enormous den, the fire had grown dull and all their monstrous heads made huge shadows on the walls and on the ceiling. No sound could be heard save the quiet breathing of the drunken old man, who was asleep.

Marius was waiting in an anxiety which everything increased. The riddle was more impenetrable than ever. Who was this "little girl," whom Thénardier had also called the Lark? was it his "Ursula?" The prisoner had not seemed to be moved by this word, the Lark, and answered in the most natural way in the world: I do not know what you mean. On the other hand, the two letters U. F. were explained; it was Urbain Fabre, and Ursula's name was no longer Ursula. This Marius saw most clearly. A sort of hideous fascination held him spell-bound to the place from which he observed and commanded this whole scene. There he was, almost incapable of reflection and motion, as if annihilated by such horrible things in so close proximity. He was waiting, hoping for some movement, no matter what, unable to collect his ideas and not knowing what course to take. "At all events," said he, "if the Lark is she, I shall certainly see her, for the Thénardiess is going to bring her here. Then all will be plain. I will give my blood and my life if need be, but I will deliver her. Nothing shall stop me."

Nearly half an hour passed thus. Thénardier appeared absorbed in a dark meditation, the prisoner did not stir. Nevertheless, Marius thought he had heard at intervals and for some moments a little dull noise from the direction of the prisoner.

Suddenly Thénardier addressed the prisoner: "Monsieur Fabre, here, so much let me tell you at once."

These few words seemed to promise a clearing up. Marius listened closely. Thenardier continued: "My spouse is coming back, do not be impatient. I think the Lark is really your daughter, and I find it quite natural that you should keep her. But listen a moment; with your letter, my wife is going to find her. I told my wife to dress up, as you saw, so that your young lady would follow her without hesitation. They will both get into the fiacre with my comrade behind. There is somewhere outside one of the barriers a *maringotte* with two very good horses harnessed. They will take your young lady there. She will get out of the carriage. My comrade will get into the *maringotte* with her, and my wife will come back here to tell us: 'It is done.' As to your young lady, no harm will be done her; the *maringotte* will take her to a place where she will be quiet, and as soon as you have given me the little two hundred thousand francs, she will be sent back to you. If you have me arrested, my comrade will give the Lark a pinch, that is all. The prisoner did not utter a word. After a pause, Thenardier continued: "It is very simple, as you-see. There will be no harm done unless you wish there should be. That is the whole story. I tell you in advance so that you may know." He stopped; the prisoner did not break the silence, and Thenardier resumed: "As soon as my spouse has got back and said: 'The Lark is on her way,' we will release you, and you will be free to go home to bed. You see that we have no bad intentions."

Appalling images passed before Marius's mind. What! this young girl whom they were kidnapping, they were not going to bring her here? One of those monsters was going to carry her off into the gloom! where?—And if it were she. Marius felt his heart cease to beat. What was he to do? Fire off the pistol? Put all these wretches into the hands of justice? But the hideous man of the pole-axe would none the less be out of all reach with the young girl, and Marius remembered these words of Thenardier, the bloody signification of which he divined: *If you have me arrested, my comrade will give the Lark a pinch.*

Now it was not by the Colonel's will alone, it was by his love itself, by the peril of her whom he loved, that he felt himself held back.

This fearful situation, which had lasted now for more than an hour, changed its aspect at every moment. Marius had the strength to pass in review successively all the most heartrending conjectures, seeking some hope and finding none. The tumult of his thoughts strangely contrasted with the deathly silence of the den.

In the midst of this silence they heard the sound of the door of the stairway which opened, then closed:

The prisoner made a movement in his bonds.

"Here is the bourgeoisie," said Thenardier.

He had hardly said this, when in fact the Thénardiess burst into the room, red, breathless, panting, with glaring eyes, and cried, striking her big hands upon her hips both at the same time: "False address!"

The bandit whom she had taken with her, came in behind her and picked up his pole-axe again: "False address?" repeated Thénardier.



She continued: "Nobody! Rue Saint Dominique, number seventeen, no Monsieur Urbain Fabre! They do not know who he is!"

She stopped for lack of breath, then continued: "Monsieur Thénardier! this old fellow has cheated you! you are too good, do you see! I would have cut up the *margoulette* for you in quarters, to begin with! and if he had been ugly, I would have cooked him alive! Then he would have had to tell where the girl is, and had to tell where the rhino is! That is how I would have fixed it! No wonder that they say men are stupider than women! Nobody! number seventeen! it is a large portecochère! No Monsieur Fabre! Rue Saint Dominique, full gallop, and drink-money to the driver, and all! I spoke to the porter and the portress, who is a fine, stout woman, they did not know the fellow."

Marius breathed. She, Ursula or the Lark, she whom he no longer knew what to call, was safe.

While his exasperated wife was vociferating, Thénardier had seated himself on the table; he sat a few seconds without saying a word, swinging his right leg, which was hanging down, and gazing upon the furnace with a look of savage reverie.

At last he said to the prisoner with a slow and singularly ferocious inflection: "A false address! what did you hope for by that?" "To gain time!" cried the prisoner with a ringing voice. And at the same moment he shook off his bonds; they were cut. The prisoner was no longer fastened to the bed save by one leg.

Before the seven men had time to recover themselves and to spring upon him, he had bent over to the fireplace, reached his hand towards the furnace, then rose up, and now Thénardier, the Thénardiess, and the bandits, thrown by the shock into the back part of the room, beheld him with stupefaction, holding above his head the glowing chisel, from which fell an ominous light, almost free, and in a formidable attitude.

At the judicial inquest, to which the ambuscade in the Gorbeau tenement gave rise in the sequel, it appeared that a big sou, cut and worked in a peculiar fashion, was found in the garret, when the police made a descent upon it; this big sou was one of those marvels of labor which the patience of the galleys produces in the darkness and for the darkness, marvels which are nothing else but instruments of escape. These hideous and delicate products of a wonderful art are to jewelry what the metaphors of argot are to poetry. There are Benvenuto Cellinis in the galleys, even as there are Villons in language. The unhappy man who aspires to deliverance, finds the means, sometimes without tools, with a folding knife, with an old case knife, to split a sou into two thin plates, to hollow out these two plates without touching the stamp of the mint, and to cut a screw-thread upon the edge of the sou, so as to make the plates adhere anew. This screws and unscrews at will; it is a box. In this box they conceal a watch spring, and this watch spring, well handled, cuts off rings of some size and bars of iron. The unfortunate convict is supposed to possess only a sou; no, he possesses liberty. A big sou of this kind, on subsequent examination by the police, was found open and in two pieces in the room under the pallet near the window. There was also discovered a little saw of blue steel which could be concealed in the big sou. It is probable that when the bandits were search-

ing the prisoner's pockets, he had this big sou upon him and succeeded in hiding it in his hand; and that afterwards, having his right hand free, he unscrewed it and used the saw to cut the ropes by which he was fastened, which would explain the slight noise and the imperceptible movements which Marius had noticed. Being unable to stoop down for fear of betraying himself, he had not cut the cords on his left leg.

The bandits had recovered their first surprise. "Be easy," said Bigrenaille to Thénardier. "He holds yet by one leg, and he will not go off, I answer for it. I tied that shank for him." The prisoner now raised his voice: "You are pitiable, but my life is not worth the trouble of so long a defence. As to your imagining that you could make me speak, that you could make me write what I do not wish to write, that you could make me say what I do not wish to say —" He pulled up the sleeve of his left arm, and added: "Here." At the same time he extended his arm, and laid upon the naked flesh the glowing chisel, which he held in his right hand, by the wooden handle.

They heard the hissing of the burning flesh; the odor peculiar to chambers of torture spread through the den. Marius staggered, lost in horror; the brigands themselves felt a shudder; the face of the wonderful old man hardly contracted, and while the red iron was sinking into the smoking, impassible, and almost august wound, he turned upon Thénardier his fine face, in which there was no hatred, and in which suffering was swallowed up in a serene majesty.

With great and lofty natures the revolt of the flesh and the senses against the assaults of physical pain, brings out the soul, and makes it appear on the countenance, in the same way as mutinies of the soldiery force the captain to show himself. "Wretches," said he, "have no more fear for me than I have of you." And drawing the chisel out of the wound, he threw it through the window, which was still open; the horrible glowing tool disappeared, whirling into the night, and fell in the distance, and was quenched in the snow.

The prisoner resumed: "Do with me what you will." He was disarmed. "Lay hold of him," said Thénardier. Two of the brigands laid their hands upon his shoulders, and the masked man with the ventriloquist's voice placed himself in front of him, ready to knock out his brains with a blow of the key, at the least motion.

At the same time Marius heard beneath him, at the foot of the partition, but so near that he could not see those who were talking, this colloquy, exchanged in a low voice: "There is only one thing more to do." "To kill him." "That is it." The husband and wife who were holding counsel.

Thénardier walked with slow steps towards the table, opened the drawer, and took out the knife.

Marius was tormenting the trigger of his pistol. Unparalleled perplexity! For an hour there had been two voices in his conscience, one telling him to respect the will of his father the other crying to him to succor the prisoner. These two voices, without interruption, continued their struggle, which threw him into agony. He had vaguely hoped up to that moment to find some means of reconciling these two duties, but no possible way had arisen. The peril was now urgent, the last limit of

hope was passed; at a few steps from the prisoner, Thénardier was reflecting with the knife in his hand.

Marius cast his eyes wildly about him; the last mechanical resource of despair.

Suddenly he started.

At his feet, on the table, a clear ray of the full moon illuminated, and seemed to point out to him a sheet of paper. Upon that sheet he read this line, written in letters that very morning, by the elder of the Thénardier girls.

"THE COGNES ARE HERE."

An idea, a flash crossed Marius's mind; that was the means which he sought; the solution of this dreadful problem which was torturing him, to spare the assassin and to save the victim. He knelt down upon his bureau, reached out his arm, caught up the sheet of paper, quietly detached a bit of plaster from the partition, wrapped it in the paper, and threw the whole through the crevice into the middle of the den.

It was time. Thénardier had conquered his last fears, or his last scruples, and was moving towards the prisoner.

"Something fell!" cried the Thénardiess. "What is it?" said the husband. The woman had sprung forward, and picked up the piece of plaster wrapped in the paper. She handed it to her husband. "How did this come in?" asked Thénardier. "Egad!" said the woman, "how do you suppose it got in? It came through the window." "I saw it pass," said Bigrenaille. Thénardier hurriedly unfolded the paper, and held it up to the candle. "It is Eponine's writing. The devil!" He made a sign to his wife, who approached quickly, and he showed her the line written on the sheet of paper; then he added in a hollow voice: "Quick! the ladder! leave the meat in the trap and clear the camp!" "Without cutting the man's throat?" asked the Thénardiess. "We have not the time." "Which way?" inquired Bigrenaille. "Through the window," answered Thénardier. "As Ponine threw the stone through the window, that shows that the house is not watched on that side."

The mask with the ventriloquist's voice laid down his big key, lifted both arms into the air and opened and shut his hands rapidly three times, without saying a word. This was the signal to clear the decks in a fleet. The brigands who were holding the prisoner, let go of him; in the twinkling of an eye, the rope ladder was unrolled out of the window, and firmly fixed to the casing by the two iron hooks.

The prisoner paid no attention to what was passing about him. He seemed to be dreaming or praying. As soon as the ladder was fixed, Thénardier cried: "Come, bourgeoisie!" And he rushed towards the window.

But as he was stepping out, Bigrenaille seized him roughly by the collar. "No; say now, old joker! after us!" "After us!" howled the bandits. "You are children," said Thénardier. "We are losing time. The *vailles* are at our heels." "Well," said one of the bandits, "let us draw lots who shall go out first." Thénardier exclaimed: "Are you fools? are you cracked? You are a mess of *jobbards*! Losing time, isn't it? drawing lots, isn't it? with a wet finger! for the short straw! write our names! put them in a cap!——"

"Would you like my hat?" cried a voice from the door.

They all turned round. It was Javert. He had his hat in his hand, and was holding it out, smiling.

## XXI.

## THE VICTIMS SHOULD ALWAYS BE ARRESTED FIRST.

Javert, at nightfall, had posted his men and hid himself behind the trees on the Rue de la Barriere des Gobelins, which fronts the Gorbeau tenement on the other side of the boulevard. He commenced by opening "his pocket," to put into it the two young girls, who were charged with watching the approaches to the den. But he only "bagged" Azelma. As for Eponine, she was not at her post; she had disappeared, and he could not take her. Then Javert put himself in rest, and listened for the signal agreed upon. The going and coming of the fiacre fretted him greatly. At last, he became impatient, and, *sure that there was a nest there*, sure of being "*in good luck*," having recognised several of the bandits who had gone in, he finally decided to go up without waiting for the pistol shot.

It will be remembered he had Marius's pass key. He had come at the right time.

The frightened bandits rushed for the arms which they had thrown down anywhere when they had attempted to escape. In less than a second, these seven men, terrible to look upon, were grouped in a posture of defence; one with his pole-axe, another with his key, a third with his club, the others with the shears, the pineers, and the hammers. Thenardier grasping his knife. The Thenardiess seized a huge paving-stone which was in the corner of the window, and which served her daughters for a cricket.

Javert put on his hat again, and stepped into the room, his arms folded, his cane under his arm, his sword in its sheath. "Halt there," said he. "You will not pass out through the window, you will pass out through the door. It is less unwholesome. There are seven of you, fifteen of us. Don't collar us like Auvergnats. Be genteel.

Bigrenaille took a pistol which he concealed under his blouse, and put it into Thenardier's hand, whispering in his ear: "It is Javert. I dare not fire at that man. Dare you?" "*Parbleu!*" answered Thenardier. "Well, fire."

Thenardier took the pistol, and aimed at Javert.

Javert, who was within three paces, looked at him steadily, and contented himself with saying: Don't fire, now! It will flash in the pan."

Thenardier pulled the trigger. The pistol flashed in the pan.

"I told you so!" said Javert.

Bigrenaille threw his tomahawk at Javert's feet.

"You are the emperor of the devils! I surrender." "And you?" asked Javert of the other bandits.

They answered:

"We too."

Javert replied calmly :

"That is it, that is well, I said so, you are genteel." "I only ask one thing," said Bigrenaille, "that is that I shan't be refused tobacco, while I am in solitary." "Granted," said Javert. And turning round and calling behind him : "Come in now!"

A squad of sergeants de ville with drawn swords, and officers armed with axes and clubs, rushed in at Javert's call. They bound the bandits. This crowd of men, dimly lighted by a candle, filled the den with shadow. "Handcuffs on all!" cried Javert. "Come on, then!" cried a voice which was not a man's voice, but of which nobody could have said : "It is the voice of a woman."

The Thénardiess had entrenched herself in one of the corners of the window, and it was she who had just uttered this roar. The sergeants de ville and officers fell back. She had thrown off her shawl, but kept on her hat; her husband crouched down behind her, was almost hidden beneath the fallen shawl, and she covered him with her body, holding the paving stone with both hands above her head with the poise of a giantess who is going to hurl a rock.

"Take care!" she cried. They all crowded back towards the hall. A wide space was left in the middle of the garret.

The Thénardiess cast a glance at the bandits who had allowed themselves to be tied, and muttered in a harsh and guttural tone : "The cowards!"

Javert smiled, and advanced into the open space which the Thénardiess was watching with all her eyes. "Don't come near! get out," cried she, "or I will crush you!"

"What a grenadier!" said Javert; "mother, you have beard like a man, but I have claws like a woman." And he continued to advance.

The Thénardiess, her hair flying wildly and terribly, braced her legs, bent backwards, and threw the paving stone wildly at Javert's head. Javert stooped, the stone passed over him, hit the wall behind, from which it knocked a large piece of the plastering, and returned, bounding from corner to corner across the room, luckily almost empty, finally stopping at Javert's heels.

At that moment Javert reached the Thénardier couple. One of his huge hands fell upon the shoulder of the woman, and the other upon her husband's head. "The handcuffs!" cried he. The police officers returned in a body, and in a few seconds Javert's order was executed.

The Thénardiess, completely crushed, looked at her manacled hands and those of her husband, dropped to the floor and exclaimed, with tears in her eyes : "My daughters!" "They are provided for," said Javert.

Meanwhile the officers had found the drunken fellow who was asleep behind the door, and shook him. He awoke, stammering, "Is it over, Jondrette?" "Yes," answered Javert.

The six manacled bandits were standing; however, they still retained their spectral appearance, three blackened, three masked. "Keep on your masks," said Javert. And, passing them in review with the eye of Frederick II. at parade at Potsdam, he said to the three "chimney

doctors: "Good day, Bigrenaille. Good day, Brujon. Good day, Deux Millions."

Then, turning towards the three masks, he said to the man of the pole-axe: "Good day, Guélmer." And to the man with the cudgel: "Good day, Babet." And to the ventriloquist: "Your health, Claquesous."

Just then he perceived the prisoner of the bandits, who, since the entrance of the police, had not uttered a word, and had held his head down. "Untie Monsieur!" said Javert, and let nobody go out."

This said, he sat down with authority before the table, on which the candle and the writing materials still were, drew a stamped sheet from his pocket, and commenced his proces-verbal.

When he had written the first lines, a part of the formula, which is always the same, he raised his eyes: "Bring forward the gentleman whom these gentlemen had bound." The officers looked about them. "Well," asked Javert, "where is he, now?"

The prisoner of the bandits, M. Leblanc, M. Urbain Fabre, the father or Ursula, or the Lark, had disappeared.

The door was guarded, but the window was not. As soon as he saw that he was unbound, and while Javert was writing, he had taken advantage of the disturbance; the tumult, the confusion, the obscurity, and a moment when their attention was not fixed upon him, to leap out of the window.

An officer ran to the window, and looked out; nobody could be seen outside.

The rope ladder was still trembling. "The devil!" said Javert between his teeth, "that must have been the best one."



